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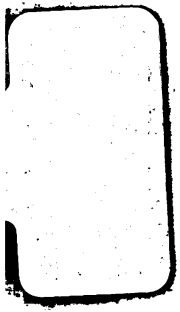

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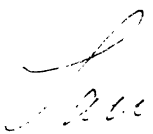

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MEMOIRS

OF

A BABYLONIAN PRINCESS,

(MARIA THERESA ASMAR,)

DAUGHTER OF EMIR ABDALLAH ASMAR;

WRITTEN BY HERSELF,

AND TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH.

Πότερον οὐχί πειρατήριόν ἐστιν ὁ Βίος ἀνθρώπων ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς;

.....

Les maux sont le marteau, la vie est une enclume;
L'homme, comme un métal, est né pour s'y forger,
Heureux, si cette épreuve a pu le corriger.

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MEMOIRS

OF A

BABYLONIAN PRINCESS.

CHAPTER I.

Departure from Damascus—An Arab Hero—Life in a Convent—An Alarm—Beyroot—The Emir Beschir—An Eastern Marriage Fête—Splendid Bath—Singular Costume—The Cedars of Lebanon.

A FEW days after this adventure I left Damascus, in company with my old travelling companion, and proceeded to Zahle. We pitched our tents on the side of a mountain overlooking the town, where we remained ten days; at the expiration of which we left for Baalbec, where we arrived after a pleasant journey through a most romantic country, flanked on the east by the Anti Libanus, and on the west, towards the sea, by the lofty Lebanon.

I remember meeting some women on our road with the most remarkable head-dress I ever beheld.

It consisted of a large round shield of silver or copper, which is fastened at the back of the head, a little on the right side, and could not be less than twelve inches in diameter. A more complete disfigurement I never remember to have seen. When I first saw them approaching us, I was not a little alarmed, taking them for a body of armed brigands. However, they saluted us with friendly demonstrations, and on their near approach, we found them to be women. Having seen Baalbec, we returned to Zahle, and laid in a stock of provisions, and then journeyed to a mountain, when we pitched our tents near a convent delightfully situated on the side of the Anti Libanus; where the Aga's wife joined me the day after our arrival. She had disguised herself in male attire, and, being almost mistress of her own actions, had contrived to make her escape from the Aga's house at an early hour of the morning before daybreak. Having succeeded in reaching the open country, she was not long in finding a guide, and, accompanied by him alone, she had braved all the dangers of the road, and baffled the vigilance of her pursuers.

I was overjoyed to see her, and lost no time in presenting her to the superior of the convent, who

was a native of Diarbekir, my particular friend, and an old acquaintance of my family, and with whom I had long been in the habit of corresponding. She promised me to render her new guest, whom I represented as a relation of mine, all the assistance in her power, and offered her a permanent asylum in the convent, when I had recounted her melancholy story, and the risks which she had run to return to the bosom of the true faith.

Nothing could be more inviting than the position of the convent, to one desirous of seclusion from the world. It stood alone, miles and miles away from any human habitation, perched high on the precipitous side of a mountain, and surrounded by scenery of the sternest and wildest character. The gardens were very spacious, containing all that was necessary for the support of the convent, and ornamented with numerous *jets d'eau*. There were fifty nuns, not including the superior, living in it; besides a confessor, and the men employed in cultivating the gardens, who resided outside. Most of the nuns were members of Christian families from Bagdad, Mosul, Diarbekir, and Persia, in which parts there are no convents.

Having remained two days with my dear friend, I set out with my companions on my way through the Holy Land, promising to return and pass the remainder of my days with her, when I had completed my tour. I paid her entrance fee, and besought her to be careful lest her retreat should be discovered. We accordingly set out on the following day, and bent our steps towards the west, in the direction of the sea. I never remember to have travelled in a country so ill adapted for horses. It is hardly possible for them to retain their feet, in consequence of the ruggedness of the road, and the endless ascents and descents which occur at every step

When we had gone a day's journey we reached a small village, situated not far from the bottom of the Wadi el Salip, the valley of the cross, which I certainly thought we never should have reached, from the extreme depth of the valley, and the precipitous nature of the descent, which occupied us full an hour, and obliged us to dismount and descend on foot. We were no sooner arrived than the inhabitants ran out to welcome us, each vying with the other in his offers of hospitality. They were Maronites. At length we were taken to a house

of no mean pretensions, the abode of the sheikh, who treated us as though we had been part of his own family. After we had partaken heartily of the good fare which was placed before us in hospitable abundance, a handsome young man, about four-and-twenty years of age, of large stature and powerful, though not ungainly, proportions, entered the room. He had on a farwa, or pelisse, made of martin skins, cut after the Turkish fashion, lined with scarlet satin, and decorated with gold frogs, and was altogether splendidly dressed. But, notwithstanding his showy costume and gallant bearing, his countenance betokened melancholy, and tears stood in his eyes. I observed also, that his presence seemed to excite in the minds of the sheikh's family mingled emotions of joy and sorrow.

Upon inquiring what this might mean, I was informed, that the very day before our arrival at the village, the youth had taken his sister, who was betrothed to a Maronite at Zahle, to that town to be married. They had proceeded half way, and were sitting upon the bank of a stream in the Wadi el Salip, taking refreshments which they had brought with them, and reposing, preparatory to their setting out to complete their journey, when a band of Mo-

towlies, consisting of ten men, with a sheikh at their head, passed along the valley. Struck by the uncommon beauty of the affianced bride, the sheikh made a pause. Seeing her defenceless position, he determined to gratify his lust, and gave the word to his followers that they should seize her and carry her off by force.

They were preparing to carry their commands into execution, when the brother of the young woman, who was fully armed, seeing his sister's dishonour inevitable, shot her dead, and then rushed with the fury of a lion on the astonished band, first discharging his pistols in the midst of them, and then dealing blows about him with sword and dagger, like a madman. Unprepared for so desperate an attack, the Motowlies were panic struck, and they were all killed. The youth, covered with wounds, at length regained his village, to tell the news of his own stern devotion, and his irreparable loss. He had ever since been a prey to melancholy; for he loved his sister with the utmost affection, and would rather have suffered a thousand deaths than harmed a hair of her head. His act was viewed by his friends, and by the whole community in which he lived, as a deed of the highest

and most virtuous heroism, and the pelisse he wore was presented to him by the sheikh, as a token of his admiration and respect.

The affection which subsists between brothers and sisters amongst this people is truly remarkable. There is scarcely any sacrifice to which they will not submit, in order to serve each other. The spirit of jealousy and selfishness is unknown to them. We all wept at the unhappy fate of the poor girl; whose prospects, only a few minutes before, held out the promise of years of happiness; and, having again partaken of the sheikh's hospitality, we retired to rest. On the morrow we thanked him for his kind treatment, and, wishing him all health and happiness, set forward, at daybreak, on our journey.

We had still some distance to go before we could reach the bottom of the valley, and the road was so rough, so strewed with huge blocks, and of such a character, that riding was quite out of the question. We accordingly dismounted and performed this part of our journey on foot, our horses being led after us; an arrangement with which I was well pleased, for the horse I rode was of considerable value. Having at length reached the bottom,

where we reposed for about an hour by the side of a running stream, and refreshed ourselves with coffee and pipes, we remounted and proceeded on our way.

Our road now lay up the side of a mountain opposite to that by which we had descended into the valley, which was even more steep and rugged than the former. It seemed, indeed, scarcely possible for any created being, except a fly or a lizard, to crawl up its side, which rose sheer up from the valley almost perpendicularly, like a large wall. On we went, staggering and stumbling, perilling our necks at every step, until at length my horse, in striving to surmount a high stone which lay in our track, stumbled and fell. I had sufficient presence of mind to keep my seat; but it was impossible to save the animal, and we both rolled down several feet. The horse was much hurt, and on getting up, I found that my left arm was broken just above the elbow, which was also much injured.

My companions, on learning my disaster, ran to my assistance, and seeing my helpless condition, carried me in their arms without loss of time to the nearest village, which was on the top of the ridge, where I met with every attention. Unfor-

tunately no surgeon was to be found, and I remained for some time in great agony, without the possibility of obtaining relief. My companions at length succeeded in bandaging the broken limb after a fashion; but, owing to their want of skill, the operation could not be performed effectually, the consequence of which was, that I remained for a long time afterwards a martyr to the most acute pain.

We pursued our journey for the space of about three days, without the occurrence of any event worthy of record, until we reached a convent situated on the top of a mountain on the western side of the Lebanon chain, surrounded by four mountains, all of them higher than that on which the convent stood. It was dedicated to St. Anthony. Here I had resolved to spend a short time, for the purpose of recovering my health, before prosecuting my journey.

At the time of our visit, the convent contained sixty nuns, who chiefly employed themselves in silk spinning, which yielded a considerable revenue to the establishment. Like the convent which I had quitted a short time before, it had a large garden

plentifully stocked with every sort of vegetable; amongst others, the bahmia, to my mind the best of all vegetables, besides oranges of great size, lemons, pomegranates, grapes, figs, peaches, and many other kinds of fruit.

The sides of one of the mountains opposite that on which the convent stands, are clothed with mulberry-trees, for the purpose of feeding their silk-worms, which are planted in regular rows, and which, viewed at a distance from the convent hill, look like a series of dark green stripes on the mountain side. The convent hill is also clothed with mulberry trees. The weather was charming during the whole of my stay, which lasted twenty days, and I was told that bad weather there is almost unknown.

Many arts are cultivated here; most of which have a reference rather to the necessities than the elegancies of life; but the principal occupation of the nuns is, as I have already mentioned, the production of silk. They descend daily into the solitary valleys which surround the convent, to collect mulberry leaves for the worms, which occupy seven or eight large chambers. Besides

a multitude of smaller rooms. The convent contained a spacious church, a large and well-lighted refectory, and an airy saloon for exercise and recreation.

I found the society so agreeable, and the situation so delightful, that I had serious thoughts of proposing to my friend whom I had left behind at the convent I alluded to before, that we should make this convent our settled abode. I was in daily expectation of hearing from her; for I was not without apprehensions that her retreat might have been discovered; and I could not think of the consequences without a thrill of horror. I, however, received a letter from her previous to my departure, assuring me that all was right; which gave me inexpressible relief.

My present mode of life accorded admirably with my taste and disposition. We went to prayer seven times a day, and I frequently remained for a couple of hours with two or three sisters singing psalms and canticles. My enthusiasm, returned in full force, now that my mind was undisturbed by the worldly anxieties which are inseparable from travel, and beyond the reach of external influences. One night, when there was an unusually brilliant moon,

I walked out after midnight prayers, to enjoy the cool night air, and indulge in a little solitary meditation, to which I was always much inclined. I strolled into a field which adjoined the convent, and was only separated from the valley, which lay far below, buried in impenetrable darkness, by a low wall.

Lost in a pleasing reverie, I walked on and on, contemplating in a dreamy sort of way, on my future wanderings in the Holy Land, and, without heeding whither I was going, found myself close by the wall. I leaned over and peered into the darkness, with a kind of idle curiosity, to see if I could distinguish any object on the mountain's side. But all was one black and awful void—not an object for the eye; not a sound for the ear. I stood for some minutes looking down into the vast, immeasurable abyss, and thought of eternity. Presently I fancied I heard a noise, as though something was creeping along the grass, on the outside of the wall. It ceased; and I thought it must have been my imagination. It returned. I distinctly heard a rustling in the long grass, and, bending over the side, beheld two eyes glaring upon me like two balls of fire.

Thinking it to be a tiger, I fled in terror, and

immediately heard a shrill cry, like that of a child. In an instant the animal bounded over the wall and pursued me. Escape was, I saw, impossible; for I heard the footsteps with increased distinctness every moment. I therefore, being naturally courageous, turned round and faced my pursuer; which I found to be a wawiia.

This, in some measure, allayed my terror, and, putting my trust in God, I made a desperate effort and seized the creature by the throat, just as he was about to spring upon me. Summoning to my aid all the strength I possessed, I succeeded in dragging my assailant back to the wall, against which I dashed it again and again, until I found its struggles grow fainter and fainter, and casting it at length over the precipice, rushed back to the convent, upon reaching which I hastened to my chamber, where, falling upon my knees, I returned thanks to Almighty God for my wonderful deliverance.

On the morrow I recounted my adventure to the nuns, who congratulated me on my escape, and set out to see if they could find the body of the animal. After some search they discovered it in a hollow, near the bottom of the valley, nearly dashed to pieces by coming in contact with the sharp-pointed

crags in its fall; and, having thus verified the truth of my tale, they surnamed me, "The Heroine."

Nothing can be more regular, nothing more rigid, than the life led by these recluses; who, apart from the world, with all its cares and all its vanities, give up their whole souls to the worship of their Creator. Indifferent to all earthly joys, their passions seem dead within them, and they appear to live only in the spirit. Their dress is composed entirely of wool; the use of linen being forbidden to all, except the sick and the infirm. Their under garment is of a moderately thick woollen fabric, and their outer dress of a coarse, heavy character. Round their waist they wear a cord, to which is suspended in front their rosary.

On their heads they wear a thick sort of mantilla, which, like the rest of their dress, is black. Their feet are covered with strong sandals, made of goat-skin, and sown with worsted, well fitted to encounter the rugged paths it is their lot to tread. Upon their breast they wear a cross, and their heads are close shaven, a task confided to one or more of the sisters, who perform the operation every fortnight. A stronger proof of their indifference to the world could hardly be imagined; for what is dearer to

woman than her tresses? At midnight the bell rings for prayers; and at its first sound—for they sleep in their clothes—every sister straightway quits her cell, and repairs to the church. In a very few minutes all are assembled, and the service begins.

The nuns arrange themselves round their superior, who, in a loud and melancholy tone begins to chaunt a hymn, every verse of which is repeated by the chorus of sisters, with such fervour that the solemn sounds awaken the echoes of the surrounding mountains. This part of the service continues for two hours; during which the superior reads some chapters from the Old and New Testament. The service being concluded, each of the sisters repairs in perfect silence to her cell, without interchanging a single word with any one. Some of the nuns, whose fervour and powers of endurance exceed those of their companions, remain till daylight upon their knees, filled with pious ecstacy.

Again at break of day the bell summons the inmates of the convent to prayer, and the same ceremonies are performed. At matins the superior commences with an exhortation, founded upon some scriptural text, which continues five or six minutes;

after which the congregation fall upon their knees and pray inwardly, in the most profound silence, for an hour, when the superior, striking with her crucifix upon her desk, gives the signal for the psalms to begin. Thereupon one of the nuns, and each in her turn, ascends the "karāia," or pulpit, and leads off the psalm, to each verse of which the others respond as before. Three or four psalms, and as many hymns, are chaunted; after which the service takes place, and occupies nearly the same time as the midnight one. The mass, at this service, is performed by a single priest, a very old man, who is separated from the congregation by a grating. On Sundays and festivals high mass is performed. The nuns confess weekly, and receive Holy Communion once a day.

No breakfast is eaten; but, mass being concluded, each sister departs to pursue her particular employment; some to instruct the novices, some to teach reading and writing, some to give instructions in singing, and others to teach needle-work, to make dresses for the nuns, to attend to the domestic arrangements, to tend the silk-worms and wind the silk; others, again, are employed in keeping the church well swept and clean. In short, idleness

has no habitation here; every moment is turned to some useful account.

At half-past eleven the bell sounds for "nones," which last till half-past twelve, when all, except those who are performing penance, repair to the refectory, where dinner is served. Those who, for using angry words to any of their sisters, for idleness, for detraction, or for some disobedience of rules, are doing penance, remain upon their knees during diuner at the door of the refectory, their arms extended in the form of a cross, and implore their companions to pray to the Almighty to forgive them their sins, and endue them with fortitude to support their penance, and avoid future temptation.

Two of the strongest nuns bring in a huge caldron containing their meal. It consists of mixed vegetables of all kinds, such as peas and lentils, dressed with oil, and, to my mind, extremely palatable. It is ladled out by two other nuns into plates, made of coarse earth baked, and set on the bare table, no cloth being ever used. During dinner, the nun to whose lot it falls ascends a pulpit, and reads passages from the Lives of the Saints, exhorting the sisterhood to follow the pious examples therein set forth.

Besides her plate of vegetables, each nun has a small roll and a cruse of water, which holds three pints, with so small a mouth, that I nearly choked myself in endeavouring to drink out of one of them. I found the nuns very dextrous in the management of this vessel, which seems to be designed to check immoderate indulgence, even in the use of the pure element. They hold the vessel about six inches above their heads, and let the water fall down their throats. This being over, an abundance of all kinds of fruit is brought on the table. The meal, altogether, occupies an hour. It is eaten in profound silence, with the exception of the exhortation I have alluded to.

After dinner the nuns are permitted to recreate themselves in the garden, and indulge in unrestrained conversation, for the space of an hour and a half or two hours. One amusement in which they are accustomed to indulge is that of getting up plays, taken from sacred subjects. They very seldom receive visits from their relations or friends, who, whenever they are permitted to see them, are compelled to converse with them through the grating.

At the time when I was at this convent, a scene of violence took place which might have been attended

with fatal results. A beautiful young Druse, of whom a chieftain had become enamoured, embraced Christianity, and was an inmate of the convent. The chief, who had entertained confident hopes of obtaining her hand in marriage, became furious on learning the step which she had taken, and, claiming the privilege accorded to friends and relatives of recluses, obtained permission to exchange a few words with the object of his passion.

Accordingly he reached the convent, attended by a considerable number of horsemen belonging to his clan, fully armed, and dismounting from his horse, which he left with his friends at the convent gate, was admitted to the place appointed for those who sought an interview with any of the inmates. The fair Druse no sooner appeared at the iron bars, than the ardent chief began to press his suit with the most fervent protestations, and used every argument he could devise to induce her to quit the convent with him and his troop, threatening, in the event of her refusal, to sack the convent and massacre its inhabitants. Finding his intreaties and threats alike unavailing, the monster, in a fit of desperation, thrust the mouth of his musket through the bars of the grate, and fired at the terrified nun,

who, having observed his deadly purpose before he could carry it into execution, adroitly stooped down, and thus escaped instant destruction, for the ball actually entered the wall immediately behind the place where she had been standing. No sooner had he fired, than the chief rushed out to join his companions.

Upon every Friday each nun, with more or less severity, according to her state of conscience and power of endurance, inflicts penance upon herself with "a discipline" made of knotted cord. This ceremony is performed in a large darkened chamber, set apart for this purpose, and the "miserere" is chaunted three times during the infliction. I have known some of the nuns encircle their naked waists with a girdle of thorns, which caused blood to flow from their bodies.

On the summit of one of the highest mountains, in the midst of which the convent is embosomed, towards the sea, is a paved square, called "El Jaljala," signifying the place of crucifixion, on which is erected a large wooden cross. Its extent may, I should think, measure four or five acres. Thither the nuns, in a body, make a pilgrimage every Sunday, which serves them for an excursion of pleasure;

and striving with each other who shall first gain the platform, they look, in their sombre vestments, like eagles upon the rugged and almost perpendicular side of the mountain.

This excursion is not wholly unattended with danger; for I was informed that, upon one occasion, an aged sister—for young and old are alike in the habit of performing this pilgrimage—lost her footing, and, before her younger companions could rush to her assistance, rolled to the bottom of the mountain. All who witnessed the dreadful accident hastened to the foot of it, in order to ascertain the fate of their hapless companion, and offer their assistance, if perchance assistance could be of any avail. But, alas! the spark of life had fled: they found only a mangled corpse.

How often, in later years, my soul distracted by anguish, my body worn by suffering, and without a single friend to speak a word of comfort to my wounded soul, have I found relief in recalling to mind the delightful scene which I used to behold from that sacred mountain! On one side the mighty Lebanon, piercing the sky with its stern and rugged peaks; on the opposite side was the open sea, the white sails sparkling on her

broad blue bosom, like twinkling stars in the firmament of heaven; boundless and infinite, too, as that firmament, seemed the tranquil deep in the bright atmosphere of Syria. Far out at sea, but still plainly visible, the island of Cyprus reared its head.

Thus surrounded by all that is beautiful in nature, fanned by a gentle breeze, impregnated with the combined fragrance of myriads of sweet-smelling herbs; my senses attuned to devotion by soft distant sounds of a hundred bells, which called the pious to prayers, from the tall towers of the surrounding convents; I have often fallen on my knees in an ecstacy of religious transport, and shed tears of joy.

In their pilgrimage to this mountain, the nuns take with them provisions, consisting of fruits and coffee, of which they partake, after having gone through their devotions. At a few yards distance from the convent, on the same eminence, is a building set apart for the use of strangers. Here also reside the confessor, an old man eighty years of age, and those employed in attending to the gardens, &c. Here, too, the bishop who had travelled with me from Bagdad was lodged, together with his attendants.

Hard by this building was a paddock, in which

were kept the animals belonging to the convent, consisting of cows, asses, and mules. I think I never saw so many fowls congregated together as I beheld here; there could not have been fewer than five hundred; and what amused me exceedingly was to see the poultry retire to their roosts at the first chime of the "Ave Maria," with as much regularity as the nuns themselves.

That which undoubtedly made me derive such unalloyed pleasure from outward objects was my earnest devotion to the truths of the Christian faith, and my passionate conviction of the goodness of human nature. Notwithstanding the bitter trials I had already undergone, I was still Oriental enough in my feelings to attribute my calamities to the will of Providence, and could not permit myself to connect them with any feelings of resentment, still less of hatred, against those whom I regarded as mere blind instruments in the hands of an all-wise Providence. I as yet neither suspected hypocrisy, nor feared deceit; egotism, cold-hearted neglect of friends in adversity, falsehood and malignity, for me formed no ingredients in human nature.

Alas! this day-dream of human perfection has

long since vanished; and if I am now disposed to look at the actions of mortals with suspicion, where I formerly only looked with credulity and admiration, at least, it is, God knows, not without a cause. Repelled where I fondly loved—deceived where I blindly trusted—scorned in adversity by those who fawned on me in my prosperity—insulted, spurned, rejected, and abandoned by all save a few, who seem born to redeem their race—who shall —tell *me* who, from plenty have been reduced to penury by the evil machinations of my fellow-mortals—who have known the bitter humiliation of wanting that which I myself have often in happier days, "when my root was opened beside the waters, and the dew continued on my harvest," dispensed to those less fortunate than myself—who, I say, shall tell me now of the perfection of human nature?

How shall my heart again clothe itself in the white robe of confidence, for are not all false and hollow? The son of Islam strikes his foeman with the sword; but the faithless Christian wounds his brother with the tongue, whose words are poison. "They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent; the venom of asps is under their lips." How many

have I known—how many have I trusted, who, with scripture in their hands, and the words of the true God on their tongues, in their hearts worshipped Mammon! The world teems with falsehood and iniquity; and who knows whether the wrath of the Almighty is not stayed by these few pious, unworldly souls, who, shunning the world and all its vanities, in their lonely mountain retreat, never cease to offer up prayers to the throne of Grace for their helpless fellow-mortals?

I now began to prepare, but not without feelings of sincere regret, for my departure from the convent; for the simple, unaffected kindness of these industrious recluses had completely won my affections. As it was my intention, however, to visit many more of the convents situated on that side of the Lebanon, I could not well prolong my stay. It was necessary, for many reasons, that the bishop with whom I was travelling should proceed as soon as possible to Beyroot. In the first place, a valuable mare, which he had brought with him from Bagdad, had unfortunately got loose from the convent paddock, and had been devoured by wolves; he was, therefore, anxious to proceed thither, in order to

repair his loss. In the next place, he had just received a letter from his brother, an eminent "jouarchi," or jewel merchant, acquainting him that he had just arrived from India, where he had been on a commercial venture, and entreating him to lose no time in joining him.

The superior of the convent, on learning our destination, kindly offered me a letter of introduction, which I thankfully accepted, to an Amira of the Shehab family, a distant relative of the Emir Beschir, who lived in an elegant palace at no great distance from Beyroot, on a mountain called Shimlan, forming part of the ridge which rises immediately behind that city. As we had not a very long journey before us, the Amira's residence being not more than three or four hours ride from the convent, we did not start till eight o'clock in the morning. It was the month of May, and we had rather a warm journey, which made me regret that we had not started somewhat earlier.

We reached the palace of the Amira Haidr at noon, and I was not sorry to get under shelter; for the sun was scorching. The Amira had re-

ceived intelligence of our approach, and had sent out a considerable number of her retinue to await our arrival. As soon as we had dismounted, we were shown into the reception-room, where our host was waiting to receive us. I presented my letter of introduction, upon reading which she manifested a deep sympathy with my misfortunes, and assured me that her house was mine. After some moments spent in mutual civilities, sorbets were served, and censers filled with sweet smelling incense were brought into the room.

I was particularly struck with the appearance of the Emir. He was an old man, apparently about seventy years of age. Although his thinly scattered locks and snow-white beard, which reached his girdle, plainly told that more than three-score years must have passed over his head, still his step was firm, and his form erect as that of a youth. His eye was bright and shining with benevolence, and his clear complexion and ruddy cheek bespoke cheerfulness and health. Both he and his wife were dressed with great splendour, and seemed well fitted to preside in the noble palace in which they lived. The Amira was, within a few years, as old as her lord, and they had but one child, a

daughter, who was married to an Emir of considerable wealth.

Before retiring to rest, I went on the terrace of the palace to see the view, which they told me was very splendid. I was not disappointed; for I do not remember ever to have beheld a more charming scene. Looking towards the sea, to the north-west, I beheld a stupendous mountain chain, stretching for sixty leagues from the Cape of Saida (to the south of my position) to Cape Ziaret, near Latakia, now rising perpendicularly from the sea, and crowned with toppling convents, whose white walls and blue domes seemed inaccessible to all created beings, save the eagles which were seen rising in circling eddies, apparently without moving a wing, until they seemed mere black specks in the deep blue firmament. At other points, the mountains receded suddenly—forming spacious bays. Below was the town of Beyroot, with its tall minarets, presenting a sharp outline against the brilliant colour of the sky.

Between the town of Beyroot and the Shimlan, a series of steps intervened, supported by walls, on which grew forests of olive and mulberry trees. Here and there around the town, the white terraces

of country villas peeped out from amongst luxuriant groves of orange, lemon, and aloe trees.

On the following morning, we descended to Beyroot. My companion's first care was to provide himself with a horse. He accordingly lost no time in repairing to the Sok al Haiul, or horse-market of Beyroot, where he soon succeeded in suiting himself with a fine white mare, bred on the Haourān, for which he paid, I think, five hundred piastres, equal at that period, as nearly as possible to five hundred francs.

The bishop now made inquiries respecting his brother, and soon ascertained that he was still on board the vessel in which he had arrived from Egypt, which was called "Markab Beyleek," and lay at anchor off the town. We soon procured a boat, and went on board, and I remember well my astonishment on seeing so huge a machine in the midst of the sea. It seemed to me like a floating village.

The brothers were naturally full of joy at beholding each other after so long an absence; for many years had passed since they had met. When their mutual congratulations were over, and they had arranged some matters of business, which they had

to transact, we rose to depart. This the jouarchi would not listen to, but insisted that we should dine on board; so that we staid till evening, when we reached the shore, after having taken an excellent repast, served quite in the Arab style.

On our return to Shimlan, which we did not reach till late at night, we found an invitation from the wife of the secretary of the Pasha of Acre, to a grand party at the principal bath in Beyroot, given in honour of the approaching nuptials of her sister, who was to be married on the day succeeding the festivities.

The entertainment given on these occasions is very similar to a grand ball in European countries, save that it lasts from eight in the morning till dusk. Invitations are issued fifteen days beforehand. Great preparations are made, and the expense is very considerable; the number invited amounting not unfrequently to three or four hundred. Here the bride spends the day with her female friends, who enjoy themselves alternately in bathing, dancing, singing, eating, drinking, and smoking. Professional dancers and singers are usually engaged upon these festive occasions.

All over the east the baths, as it is well known,

are public institutions, maintained by the government, and are open one half of the day to the female sex, and the other half to the male. At the period of which I am now speaking, the summer of the year 1825, they were open to the women from eight in the morning until four in the afternoon; after which they were open for men only. Sentinels are always posted at the gate to prevent improper visitors. On high occasions, similar to that of which I have just spoken, one of the public baths is devoted to the use of the bride and her friends for the whole day, to the exclusion of all strangers.

The bath in which the fête in honour of the approaching marriage of the Sitte Abourass (for so was the bride elect called) was celebrated, was one of the most splendid I ever remember to have seen. As usual, it was divided into three chambers. The first is of the same temperature as the outside air; the second is slightly warmed. There it is that the ladies divest themselves of their clothes preparatory to bathing; and here also are ranged around the walls beds for the convenience of those who seek temporary repose during the hours spent at the bath.

The third room is of a still higher temperature, and is devoted to bathing. In the bath which I am now describing, this chamber was in the very first style of magnificence. It was about fifty feet long, forty wide, and twenty in height. The roof consisted of a number of small domes, not less, I am certain, than twenty, glazed with stained glass of every variety of colour, which shed a soft and beautifully chequered light on the polished marble pavement. The walls were covered with Arabesque ornaments of elegant design, and cocks were fixed round to supply hot and cold water. At each of these stood a "wrasāla," or bathing woman, with a low bathing stool beside her.

I reached the bath at about two o'clock in the afternoon, and found that I was the last who arrived; the rest of the company having been there ever since eight in the morning. Amongst the visitors were many of the most considerable ladies in the neighbourhood, some with no less than ten negresses and white attendants; some of whom prepared refreshments, while others handed them to the company, and occupied themselves in dressing and undressing the ladies, and otherwise ministering to their wants and pleasures.

When I entered the room, there were not fewer than three hundred and fifty ladies present, and all seemed to be in the height of enjoyment; some bathing, some stretching out their limbs in an agreeable languor on the couches in the second chamber, some eating sweetmeats and drinking coffee, others again smoking their nerghilas, others singing, others dancing, and by far the greater number talking and laughing. Indeed, a more lively scene I never beheld. Some were magnificently attired, and made a splendid display of rich stuffs and jewels, with "yzars," or veils, of the finest muslin, and white as the feathers of the luglug.

And what can be a greater luxury than the bath? In the east it is the ladies' only place of relaxation. There it is that she sees her friends and acquaintances; there it is that she finds vent for her griefs, and shares her joys, free and unrestrained, with the friends of her heart; there it is, and there only, that she is free from the jealous espionage of her lord, which stops at the hammam's threshhold. Let justice be done to the Turk. He is not devoid of public spirit, as every one must admit, who has ever enjoyed the luxury of bathing

in one of the magnificent establishments maintained at the public expense in the east, free of all charge, with the exception of a donation, amounting to about a franc, to the bathing woman, in return for which the bather is supplied with sherbet, coffee, and pipes. I quitted the bath at six in the evening, and returned to the Shimlan, completely exhausted with the days festivities, and retired to bed immediately.

On the following day, we received a visit from the step-daughter of the Emir Beschir, who was living at a short distance from the Shimlan, about three mountains off, towards the north. She had heard that a lady from Bagdad was on a visit to the Amira, her relation, and immediately set out for her palace. She was nearly sixty years of age, had been many years a widow, and, during the greater part of her widowhood, had led a life of solitude, occasionally paying a visit to her parents.

We were on the terrace in the morning, enjoying the air, protected from the sun by the tent commonly used for this purpose, which is open all around, covering only the head, like a vast parasol, when I observed what appeared to me to be a

caravan, winding its way slowly around the base of the Shimlan. In the front I saw a lady, evidently advanced in years, mounted on a roan mare, clad in a flowing yzar, or veil, of white muslin, and of such ample dimensions, that it completely covered the haunches of the animal on which she rode, descending almost to the ground. She was evidently a person of some consequence, and the head of the caravan; for around her rode eight female attendants, likewise enveloped in long yzars of dazzling whiteness; so that from the distance at which we were, they looked not unlike a flock of luglugs on the mountain's side. Four negresses followed, and a numerous train of "hazmetkarīas," or servants, presenting a motley group, clad in every colour, brought up the rear.

This cavalcade the Amira, who stood by my side on the terrace, discovered at a glance to belong to her kinswoman, the Sitte Hadouch, and she it was whom I had observed in the front. I kept my eyes fixed on the advancing party, until a turn in the mountain hid them from my view, and then hastened down into the reception-room below, to accompany the Amira in greeting her illustrious guest.

We had not waited long before she arrived. In a few minutes, she was ushered into the room where we waited her coming; and, after embracing her relations, she was introduced to me. On removing her veil, I perceived the remains of beauty, which, in youth, must have been of the highest order. She was dressed in the fashion of the country, having on her head a large tentour, or horn, about two feet in length, of burnished gold, inlaid with precious stones, which stood up nearly perpendicularly, and from the top of which the yzar fell in large graceful folds on her shoulders.

She asked me many questions concerning my country and its customs, in which she displayed much knowledge and intelligence, and betrayed deep interest and sympathy in the accounts which I gave her of the cruelties and oppressions to which the Christians were subjected in the land of my birth; so different from their position in the more favoured abode in which she herself had lived from her infancy. In short, it was not long before I had repeated to her my oft-told history of sorrow and misfortune. I told her of my projected pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and communicated to her my resolution of returning, after having accomplished

my pious mission, to the Lebanon, there to seek an asylum, in which I might be permitted to run out the rest of my course in peace, unruffled by worldly passions, unvexed by worldly persecutions, and wholly devoted to the service of my Creator.

In these feelings the Sitte Hadouch manifested a warm sympathy, and told me that she herself, from choice, had for years led the life of a recluse, in which she assured me there was more true satisfaction to be found than in all the enjoyments which this world can bestow. Before she quitted the Shimlan, she exacted a promise from me that I would spend the following day at her house. This I willingly promised to do, and we parted with mutual protestations of affection and friendship, and a promise on her part that she would write to her step-father, the Emir Beschir, governor of the Lebanon, with the view of interesting him in my behalf.

Accordingly, the following day I spent, agreeably to promise, with the Sitte Hadouch, at her palace, which stood on a mountain called, if I remember rightly, Mansouria, at a very short distance from the Shimlan. It was large and elegant, and abundantly provided with fountains, and every

other appliance necessary for comfort and health in the east. She had extensive pleasure-grounds, gardens, and large pastures well furnished with live stock. She was liberal, hospitable, and charitable. Hard by her own dwelling stood a building set apart for the use of strangers, without distinction of nation, caste, or religion, who, in addition to receiving shelter, were here freely entertained as long as they chose to remain.

She was, as I have already stated, the step-daughter of the Emir Beschir, being the issue of the Emir's late wife, who had been dead about three years, by a former marriage. The late Amira, who was celebrated in her youth for her beauty, the splendour of which obtained for her the name of El Sitte Shams, or "the Sun," was much older than the Emir Beschir, whose conduct to her, till the day of her death, was invariably that of a tender and affectionate husband. Never did two souls become more entirely one than those of the excellent, the virtuous, the noble-hearted Emir and his wife, during the forty years in which their lot was cast together for weal or for woe.

The Sitte Hadouch was, in every way, a worthy descendant of her mother; for she spent her whole

life in doing good, whenever an opportunity presented itself; showing, in every action of her useful life, a fear of God and a love of her neighbour. She treated us with the greatest hospitality during our stay, which lasted five or six days. I was much struck with the delicate flavour of the eggs which I tasted at the Sitte Hadouch's table. I had never eaten any before which could compare with them; nor do I recollect to have tasted any so good since that time. On asking my hostess the reason of this, she told me that it was her practice to keep a quantity of fowls in a large chamber, which she had built on purpose, and feed them entirely on rice; to which circumstance alone she ascribed their superiority to others.

The Sitte Hadouch slept but little. Her constitution was of so peculiar a character, that she was often unable to take more than three or four hours sleep during the whole night. In order, therefore, to while away the hours not employed in reading and praying, in which occupations she spent no inconsiderable share of her time, she kept in the house a hakeya, or female Arab story-teller. This hakeya was of noble family, who had been reduced from a state of affluence to complete

poverty, and who had, therefore, in order to save herself from penury, adopted this calling, which is ordinarily followed by persons of mean station, although it requires no small share of talent and imagination, besides a most retentive memory.

I quitted her with regret, and promised to pay her another visit on my return from Jerusalem. She gave me a letter to the Emir Abdallah, nephew of the Emir Beschir, who governed the Kasrawān, to which I was about to proceed, under his uncle. From Mansouria I went, in company with my old travelling companions, straight to Razir, where the Emir Abdallah resided, and was received with that warm and generous hospitality which so nobly distinguishes the Shehab family. He courteously sent an escort with us, for the purpose of showing us the spots worth seeing in the neighbourhood. We visited the Deir el-Harisa; a convent perched on the summit of a high crag, immediately overhanging the sea, and surmounted by scenery of the most varied and striking character, with an almost boundless view, both on land and ocean. On our right we looked down into a deep valley, whose sides were thickly studded with picturesque habitations, standing in the midst of

plantations of olive trees, their walls covered with luxuriant vines. Immediately below us, on the sea beach, stood the karāit Nabbi Yunus, or the village of the Prophet Jonas, where, as the tradition goes, the prophet Jonas was disgorged from the whale's belly, and cast ashore; from which circumstance it derives its name.

On our left were the roads of Beyroot, sparkling with endless white sails, and the town itself. The rising ground immediately behind it was adorned by numerous country houses, and still further inward stood the magnificent forest of Italian firs, planted by Fakr el Din. The bishop was so moved by the magnificence of the scene, that he cried aloud, "O Lord, the earth is filled with Thy glory, and the firmament declareth the work of Thy hands."

On quitting the convent of Harisa, we returned to Razir, where we slept, and set out on the following morning for the Cedars, the contemporaries of the wisest of the wise, which were distant from the village where we slept, as near as I remember, about forty miles. At the end of two days travel, we arrived at the village of Eden, after a tedious and rugged ascent, during which we were frequently in imminent danger of being dashed to pieces. This

village is, I believe, the highest human habitation in the Lebanon, and is close upon the eternal snow. Its inhabitants only reside there during the summer months. On the approach of winter, they quit it for their dwellings on the plain.

The Maronite sheikh of this village, to whom we had a letter of introduction, received us with great hospitality in his castle,—a handsome structure, of considerable size and strength, in the Arabic style of architecture,—and furnished us with guides to the Cedars; for which we started, after staying to refresh ourselves a few hours at Eden.

In a short time, we arrived at the top of a ridge, overlooking the Wadi el Kadisha, a deep and narrow valley, enclosed on each side by perpendicular rocks, of so great a height, that it was impossible to look down without feeling dizzy. At the top of the Wadi, a broad sheet of water falls upwards of a hundred feet, filling the whole valley with its roar.

From this ridge we descended to the village of Beshirai, by a path cut in the solid rock, so narrow and precipitous, that it required no ordinary nerve to tread it with safety. In about a quarter of an hour, we reached the Cedars, seven in number, all

that now remain of those glorious forests which were once the pride of Lebanon. What a tumult of varied emotions filled my breast when I saw before my eyes these hoary giants of antiquity, and thought that their fellows were hewn down, perchance to furnish beams for the holy temple which Solomon built to the Most High. What now remains of their companions? They have perished with the cunning devices fashioned upon them by the hand of man, and the children of those that worshipped in the temple are outcasts on the face of the earth, and strangers in the land of the Frank and the Mahometan. How many nations have these trees seen blotted out from the face of the earth? "Behold the Assyrian was like a cedar in Libanus, with fair branches, and full of leaves, of a high stature; and his top was elevated among the thick boughs. The waters nourished him, the deep set him up on high, the streams thereof ran round about his roots, and it sent forth its rivulets to all the trees of the country. Therefore was his height exalted above all the trees of the country, and his branches were multiplied, and his boughs were elevated, because of many waters. And when he had spread forth his shadow, all the fowls of the air

made their nests in his boughs, and all the beasts of the forest brought forth their young under his branches, and the assembly of many nations dwelt under his shadow. And he was most beautiful for his greatness, and for the spreading of his branches; for his root was near great waters. The cedars in the Paradise of God were not higher than he; the fir trees did not equal his top; neither were the plane trees to be compared with him for branches; no tree in the Paradise of God was like him in his beauty. For I made him beautiful and thick set with many branches; and all the trees of pleasure that were in the Paradise of God envied him. Therefore thus saith the Lord God: because he was exalted in height, and shot up his top green and thick, and his heart was lifted up in his height; I have delivered him into the hands of the mighty one of the nations; he shall deal with him: I have cast him out according to his wickedness. And strangers, and the most cruel of the nations, shall cut him down and cast him away upon the mountains, and his boughs shall fall in every valley, and his branches shall be broken on every rock of the country; and all the people of the earth shall depart from his shadow and leave him."

How fearfully has this prophecy been fulfilled! The Assyrian has long since ceased to be numbered among independent nations; but the stout tree, to which he was likened in his strength, still rears its mighty head, defying alike the hand of time and the fury of the blast. The cedars of Eden appear to have been much celebrated for their superiority over all the other trees in Lebanon in early times; for the prophet from whom the above passages are taken says, "I shook the nations with the sound of his fall when I brought him down to hell, with them that descend into the pit; and all the trees of pleasure, the choice and best in Libanus, all that were moistened with waters, were comforted in the owest parts of the earth."

At the present day these trees are held in high veneration by all sects of Arabs, by whom divine powers and intelligence are ascribed to them. The inhabitants of the surrounding villages celebrate mass at the foot of the cedars every year. I had the good fortune to be there just at the time, in the month of June, when this ceremony takes place, and eagerly availed myself of the opportunity of mingling my prayers with those of the devout and simple-hearted peasants of the mountain.

From the village of Eden I went to the Deir Marantonius Kashāia, which is situated at no great distance from the cedars. This is a convent of great repute, and is held in high veneration, not only by Christians but also by the Druses and Motowlies, who constantly bring offerings and presents in proof of their respect and reverence. A large building, connected with this convent, is set apart for the use of pilgrims, who flock thither in great numbers.

During the three days I remained in the Deir Marantonius Kashāia, I met with a Druse Amira, who, together with her husband and many attendants, had taken up her abode in the pilgrim's quarter. She had been married nearly thirty years, and Providence hitherto had not blessed her with children, which in the East is almost universally regarded as a heavy calamity, and a proof of Divine displeasure. Her visit to the convent was for the purpose of procuring the prayers and intercessions of its inhabitants, on the value of which great reliance was placed, in union with those of the patron saint, St. Anthony of Egypt, in whose honour the Amira had brought with her a costly offering, consisting of a magnificent lamp of silver gilt, with

many branches richly chased, and ornamented with various devices, for the use of the church.

I had, from my infancy, a tendency to associate with the pensive and melancholic, in preference to the joyous and light-hearted. Indeed, I had always preferred solitude to society; I longed to lead the life of the lone bird on the mountain, communing with nature and with nature's all beneficent Creator. How is my longing increased, now that I have seen the wickedness, the fickleness, and perfidy of corrupted human nature! The situation of the Amira touched me; her faith in the efficacy of prayer charmed me; and during my stay in the convent we were inseparable. Indeed, after the first quarter of an hour we were as friends of ten years' standing.

We had even no secrets from each other; she, without reserve, told me her history, and I gave her an account of the bitter calamities which had made me a stranger and an outcast from the land of my fathers. We shared our woes, and found sweet consolation in pouring out the secrets of our hearts.

I told her that I was determined to abandon the world, and dedicate the rest of my days to the service of my Creator, in imitation of Saint Theresa, after

whose name I had been baptised; but that I desired, before taking this final step, to visit the various scenes in which the mighty events recorded in Holy Writ had taken place.

On learning that I was about to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, she entreated that I would not omit to pray for her at the various altars to which I was about to offer my devotions, if by this means the heavy load of opprobrium and contempt, cast on her by her neighbours, might be put away from her. "Be comforted," I said, "'Allah kerim,' God is generous; my prayers shall be freely offered at every holy shrine, and I feel assured they will not be offered in vain."

CHAPTER II.

Beyroot—Voyage to Jaffa—Jaffa—Ramelah—The Holy City—The Holy Sepulchre — Holy Week at Jerusalem — The Anointing Stone—Mount Calvary—Chapel of the Virgin—Grotto of St. Helen—Subterranean River—Enthusiasm of the Pilgrims—A Miracle—Valley of Josaphat—Tomb of the Virgin — The Holy Mount — The Brook of Kedron—The Grotto of Jeremias.

FROM the Deir Marantonius Khashāia I proceeded straightway to Beyroot, in company with my travelling companions from Bagdad. On our arrival there we put up at the house of the bishop's brother, the jouarchi, to whom we had paid a visit on board the Markab Beileek during my former stay at Beyroot, who had made every arrangement for our comfort. Here we remained three days, awaiting the arrival of a "shaktura," a three-masted vessel, which was expected every day from Cyprus on its way to Jaffa, whither our party was bound.

Previously to going on board, I came to the determination of disguising myself as a man, in order that I might with greater liberty visit the various points of interest in the Holy Land. It is the common practice of the "makdessia," or pilgrims, travelling thitherward to imprint indelibly upon their arms, from the wrist nearly up to the elbow, by means of puncturing and staining with indigo, various devices representing the Cross, the Mount of Olives, the Tomb of Christ, and other objects, having reference to the circumstances of our Saviour's earthly career, to serve as a perpetual record of their pious pilgrimage, to the latest day of their existence. This ceremony I did not undergo, but my fervour was not the less; for my longing was as the longing of a fond mother to behold again a dear son who has gone out to battle. The name I assumed was el Hawajah Amin, "the Faithful," Hawajah being merely a complimentary title.

Having been furnished with a letter of recommendation to the Russian consul at Jaffa by the jouarchi, we bade adieu to Beyroot, and set sail in the shaktoura, with a clear sky and a fair wind. There were several pilgrims on board besides our party, and amongst them a Greek lady from Aleppo,

accompanied by two little children, who afforded me a great deal of entertainment during the voyage, by their liveliness and intelligence. They spoke Arabic with great fluency, and showed a marvellous curiosity concerning every thing they saw.

We slept on deck; the night was beautiful and clear, and the sky looked like a veil studded with diamonds. I awoke early in the morning, and was told that we were opposite Cesaria. Mount Carmel was pointed out to me in the distance, and I fell on my knees in pious awe. In the evening we cast anchor opposite Jaffa, formerly Joppe, so called, it is said, from the name of the third son of Noe, who is supposed to have founded the first city of that name. The tradition is, that Joppe was the first city built in the world, as well as the spot where Noe built his ark. At Jaffa, too, the cedar wood sent by Hiram, King of Tyre, for the building of the Temple, is said to have been landed. "So Hiram gave Solomon cedar trees and fir trees, according to all his desire. And Solomon allowed Hiram twenty thousand measures of wheat for provision for his house, and twenty measures of the purest oil; these gave Solomon to Hiram every

year." It was to Joppe that Jonas fled, on his way to Tharsis, from the presence of the Lord. "And Jonas rose up to flee unto Tharsis from the face of the Lord; and he went down to Joppe, and found a ship going to Tharsis; and he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it to go with them to Tharsis, from the face of the Lord."

We landed, and took up our quarters at the house of one Yusuf el Mosāli, to whom we had a letter of introduction, a respectable merchant in silk stuffs and golden tissues; who on the following day took us to a garden which he had at a short distance from the town, where we spent a few hours very pleasantly.

We returned to Jaffa to dinner. Our host had two very fine children, who, according to the prevailing custom in all well-bred families in the East, were not permitted to sit at table with their parents and their guest, but stood behind them during the meal, and saw that they wanted for nothing. The house of Yusuf el Mosāli was situated in the highest part of the town, and after dinner we went on the terrace to enjoy the view, which was very extensive, on account of the extraordinary clearness of the

atmosphere. We could plainly see the white sails of vessels off Gaza, although near upon fifty English miles distant, in a straight line.

The next day we went to pay our respects to the Russian Consul; whose house, on account of the assistance which the shrewd Russian government always takes care to afford to pilgrims, we found completely thronged. Before quitting Jaffa, I took a stroll through its streets. I was, I confess, pleased with the town; which, although in some parts disfigured by ruins, the result of the several sieges to which it has been exposed, is, nevertheless, not destitute of beauty. It is surrounded by luxuriant gardens, well stocked with pomegranates, lemons, palms, apples, and other trees. The greater part of the ruins are on the eastern side of the town, and were caused by the siege under Djezzar Pasha. Jaffa contains some fine marble fountains, to which ladles are attached by chains, for the convenience of the stranger who is athirst.

From Jaffa our way lay across the formerly fertile plain of Saron to Ramelah. This plain, although it is no longer covered with flowers and luxuriant vegetation, still affords pasture to a considerable number of cattle, flocks, and goats. Ac-

cording to tradition, it was near Ramelah that Samson burnt the corn of the Philistines, that he might revenge himself on them because the Thamnathite took away his daughter, whom Samson had taken to wife. "And he went and caught three hundred foxes, and coupled them tail to tail, and fastened torches between their tails, and setting them on fire he let the foxes go that they might run about hither and thither. And they presently went into the standing corn of the Philistines, which being set on fire, both the corn that was carried there, and that which was still standing, was all burnt; insomuch that the flame consumed also the vineyards and the olive yards. Then the Philistines said, 'Who hath done this thing?' And it was answered: 'Samson, the son-in-law of the Thamnathite,—because he took away his wife and gave her to another,—hath done these things.' And the Philistines went up and burnt both the woman and her father." At this day, I was told, the spot swarms with foxes.

Before I arrived at Ramelah, I went to see a tank, built, it was said, by St. Helen. The descent is made by twenty-seven steps. The tank is thirty-three paces long by thirty wide, and consists of

twenty-four arches, receiving the water by twenty-four springs. From this ruin we proceeded to another at no great distance, called the Tower of the Forty Martyrs; formerly the steeple of a convent of which the ruins still remain, but now the minaret of a deserted mosque. On this spot it is believed that the Holy Family rested during the flight into Egypt.

We put up for the night at Ramelah, at the Kanisat Mar Nicodemus; a convent which is supposed to stand on the site of the house of Nicodemus; and was, when I visited it, inhabited by two old Spanish monks. On our way we had to pass the village of Jeremias, situated in the valley of that name; the residence of the most powerful tribe in the mountains of Judea, to the chief of which, Abu Ghousta, we were compelled to pay tribute.

As we drew near to the Holy City, my impatience increased to such a pitch, that the fatigue of the journey, the roughness of the road, and the danger of attack, were all forgotten. It is impossible for me to describe the feelings which filled my breast, when one of our guides pointed out to me at length the Jebel el Zeitun, the Mount of Olives; my eyes

Having visited, in a cursory manner, the principal points of interest contained in the church of the Holy Sepulchre, I returned home, with the full determination to revisit the sanctuary on the morrow.

To my great mortification I learned, on my return, that the plague had broken out in the city; which distressing event would, for a time, utterly prevent the execution of my project. Immediately we were all in a state of bustle, and actively engaged in preparing for our departure, that we might be placed beyond the reach of the pestilence.

On the following day I set out with my companions for Jaffa; where we soon succeeded in finding a vessel that was bound for Alexandria, in which we straightway embarked, about the end of 1825. From Alexandria I proceeded to Grand Cairo; from which place I made an excursion to Mount Sinai.

After a stay of some weeks at Grand Cairo I returned to Alexandria; whence I embarked in a vessel bound for Smyrna; and from Smyrna I proceeded to Constantinople. These excursions occupied me nearly twelve months; but as

nothing happened to me of sufficient importance to call for particular notice, and inasmuch as it forms no part of my design to give minute and accurate descriptions of cities, already so faithfully and so ably described by travellers who have visited them note-book in hand, I feel it will far better become me, (my object being merely to give to the British public a plain and unpretending narrative of my misfortunes), to pass over this period of my history thus briefly, than either to make a feeble attempt to enter into details and disquisitions foreign to my habits of thought, without note or memorandum to refer to, or to weary the reader with a dry catalogue, of every-day occurrences, important only to myself.

I returned to Jerusalem just before Holy Week in 1826. The day before Palm Sunday I went to the Holy Sepulchre, and joined with enthusiasm in the pious labour of cleansing the sanctuary for the great and joyous festival which was to take place on the following day. It fell to my lot to sweep away the dust from the Calvary and the Holy Sepulchre itself. Oh, joyous labour! inestimable privilege! With what intense emotion was my breast filled while I performed my sanctified task!

With what floods of grateful tears did I water the spot where man's redemption was finally accomplished!

It is impossible to enter the church of the Holy Sepulchre without being impressed with a feeling of awe and veneration, the sombre light reigning in the interior being strongly calculated to dispose the mind to reflection on the awful events which happened on the different spots now enclosed within its walls. To me the very name of the Holy Sepulchre carried with it awe and reverence; seeing that it was the first word my dear father taught me to lisp, after the Pater Noster, Credo, and Ave Maria.

The first object which presents itself on entering the church is the stone where our Saviour was anointed with myrrh and aloes. It is covered with a marble slab, having a nob at each of the four corners, to protect it from the chisels of indiscreet pilgrims, and surmounted by an iron railing. Eight lamps of large size are kept constantly burning above it. It is nearly eight feet long and almost two wide. This stone is used in common by all nations, Catholics, United and Schismatic Greeks, United and Schismatic Arme-

nians, Nestorians, Kopts, and all, in their turns, perfume it every day with much pomp and ceremony.

At the distance of thirty paces from the anointing stone, under the centre of the great dome, which was formerly sustained by sixteen marble columns, now replaced by stone supporters of a square form, and receiving light from the top, is the Golgotha, the tomb of our blessed Saviour, a small cell hewn out of the solid rock; which is in possession of the Latins. The entrance, which faces the East, is four feet high and two and a quarter wide; which makes it necessary to stoop on entering. The tomb is nearly square, being six feet long and five feet eleven inches wide, and upwards of eight feet in height. In excavating the tomb, a slab has been left about two feet six inches high, six feet long, and nearly three feet wide; on which was laid the body of our Lord, the head towards the west and the feet towards the east, as though indicating the ruin which was afterwards to fall on the early habitations of man, and that the Almighty was about to desert for ever his once favoured people. On this slab, which, for the same reason as the anointing stone, is now covered with marble,

mass is celebrated. Words cannot express the ecstacy I felt, as I knelt in breathless silence by the holy tomb; my burning lips glued to the cold marble, and the tears streaming from my eyes.

Forty-four lamps are kept constantly burning in the Holy Sepulchre; in the roof of which three apertures have been made, to allow the smoke to escape. The tomb is enclosed in a small chapel, surmounted by a dome, the walls of which are of beautiful marble of dazzling whiteness, and a smooth-faced red stone; and are ornamented by pilastres and other architectural decorations. Before entering the sepulcre, as it were in the anti-chapel, is seen a stone about a foot and a half square, marking the spot on which the stone which closed the mouth of the sepulchre was rolled by the angel. It was from this stone that the angel addressed the Maries. "And they found the stone rolled back from the sepulchre: and going in, they found not the body of the Lord Jesus. And it came to pass, as they were astonished in their mind at this, behold, two men stood by them in shining apparel. And as they were afraid and bowed their countenance towards the ground, they said unto them, Why seek you the living with the dead? He is not here, but is risen:

remember how he spoke unto you when he was yet in Galilee: saying, the son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. And they remembered his words, and going back from the sepulchre, they told all these things to the eleven, and to all the rest. And it was Mary Magdalen, and Joanna, and Mary of James, and the other women that were with them, who told these things to the apostles."

We then ascended a narrow staircase, which led us to the summit of Mount Calvary, upon which our Saviour suffered. All the superincumbent earth having been removed, the chapel which encloses this sacred spot is built upon the naked rock. It is divided into two parts by an arcade running east and west; and its inner walls are lined with marble. The northern division, which belongs to the Latins, encloses that part of Mount Calvary where our Lord was bound on the cross. The pavement here is a mosaic, principally composed of red marble; as if to mark the sacrilegious deed perpetrated on this spot, where our Saviour shed his blood to save all mankind from everlasting death.

In the southern division is shown a hole about

eighteen inches deep, in which the fatal tree was planted on which Christ was crucified. On each side of this were fixed the crosses of the two thieves, that of the good thief being on the right of our Lord; that is, towards the north, for our Saviour's face was turned towards the west, his back being towards Jerusalem; and that of the bad thief to the left, or south.

Upwards of thirty lamps are constantly kept burning on the north side of the arcade, which divides the summit of the Calvary, and fifty on the southern division. Near this is shown the rent which was made in the rock when our Saviour yielded up the ghost.

Not far off is a chapel which marks the site upon which the Blessed Virgin stood, while the dreadful preparations were making for the crucifixion of the Redeemer of the world. This is called the Chapel of the Mater Dolorosa. Near to this spot is a small chapel, under the altar of which is half a column of grey marble with black spots, two feet high and one in diameter, to which Christ was bound, when he was scourged and crowned with thorns. The other half of the column is at Rome, in the church of St. Praxede, where I recognised it instantly, by

its remarkable colour. This chapel belongs to the Abyssinians.

In the middle of the choir, which belongs to the Greeks, and is remarkable for its magnificence, is a small circle of marble, which is said to mark the centre of the earth. This also is the reputed burial place of our first parent. How awful the reflections inspired by this holy sanctuary—at once the scene of man's degradation, and the restoration of his inheritance of eternal happiness and glory! In the centre of the earth was the Saviour crucified, that the blessings of redemption might be diffused to the uttermost parts thereof.

Still going on to the right, there is a large staircase, the opening of which is cut through the wall of the church, leading by thirty steps to the grotto of St. Helen, who remained on this spot wrapped in prayer, whilst search was made further down for the true cross in the Maghārat el Salip, or the place where the cross was eventually discovered, together with the nails which pierced our Saviour's hands, the crown of thorns, and the point of the lance which pierced his side, after having remained concealed in this spot upwards of three hundred years.

This chapel of St. Helen belongs to the Armenians. It is surmounted by a dome, sustained by columns. The chapel where the cross was found is in the hands of the Latins. I remember well, when I was a child, a legate from Rome making my father a present of a very small fragment of the true cross; in exchange for which he received many valuable presents, and amongst others, a magnificent horse.

Before you arrive at the bottom, a hole is seen on the left side of the wall, about two feet and a half square; on putting the head through which the eye encounters nothing but a black void, and the rushing of a river is plainly heard from beneath. Neither its source nor its issue is known; and it seems but an additional curse inflicted on the condemned city, that, while its parched inhabitants are compelled to travel miles in search of water, which they bring in skins on the backs of asses, a plentiful supply should exist within hearing, locked fast in the bowels of the earth. Who knows whether these may not be the lost waters of the parched Kedron?

We then came to the chapel which marks the place where our Lord was stripped of his garments before he was bound to the cross. "And after

they had crucified him, they divided his garments, casting lots that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, They divided my garments among them, and upon my vesture they cast lots."

A little beyond is a chapel erected on the spot where Christ first appeared to our Blessed Lady after his resurrection; and at a few paces distance is a chapel enclosing a large block of grey marble, to mark the place where our Saviour appeared to Mary Magdalen in the form of a gardener. The first of these belongs to the Latins; the second to the Nestorians.

The festival which took place on Easter Sunday, I shall never forget as long as I live. What more noble sight to a sincere Christian, than to see the pious multitude filling every corner of the vast building which contains the tomb of our Blessed Lord! pilgrims from the east, from the west, from the north, and from the south; from Egypt, Chaldea, Greece, Armenia, Persia, India, and even China; whose pious fervour and Christian zeal had brought them hundreds and thousands of leagues; through the lonely wilderness and the parching desert; over the stormy ocean, across

fearful precipices, and over snow-capped mountains, regardless of the lion and the tiger, unmindful of the desolating samiri, and heedless of the dangers of the restless deep, to offer their humble thanksgivings, and pour forth their grateful prayers on the very spot where the great mystery of their redemption was accomplished! My soul was in rapture; for, understanding most of the tongues in which these pious Makdessiah poured forth the ecstacy of their souls, my heart shared the joy of all. As I stood in the church a body of my fellow-countrymen, Chaldeans, passed by me. As they passed, I heard them chaunt the words, "Ya àyouhà alyahoúd houaza tarak likum beitukum Kharàban la bāka likum la nabuat wala milkan." "O ye Jews, your house is desolate; your prophecies are heard no more, and your kingdom hath passed away." With what joy did I mingle in the well-remembered chaunt!

The crowd was prodigious. Men, women, and even children were wedged in one dense mass; and the children were carried aloft on their mother's shoulders, to prevent their being suffocated. This was the great event in my life; to this I had been taught to look forward as the crowning pinnacle of all my earthly joys, and I could have willingly

yielded up my breath at the close of that day of ecstacy. I thought of past happiness, poured forth a fond prayer for the repose of those blessed souls who had been so dear to me in the flesh, and forgot all my tribulations in the calmness of resignation.

The Schismatic Greeks pretend that they are the especial objects of the Divine election, and the chosen instruments by which the Almighty vouchsafes to grant the paschal light. Accordingly, at midnight, on the Saturday preceding Easter Sunday, the Greek patriarch, having headed his Church in their procession three times round the Holy Sepulchre, enters the tomb, accompanied by two priests, to propitiate the Deity, and induce Him, by their prayers and supplications, to send down on his people the light of Heaven.

After remaining for some time within the sanctuary, whilst the anxious crowd of their credulous followers remain waiting in breathless expectation outside, their patriarch makes his appearance at the door of the Sepulchre, and announces that the Almighty has listened to his prayers. In an instant, the lamps around the sanctuary are lighted up at once, and the patriarch and his attendants come forth holding lighted tapers in their hands; while,

on every side, the cry of "A miracle!—a miracle!" is heard, and all rush eagerly forward to light the taper which each carries in his hand.

At this ceremony, the Turkish governor of Jerusalem, accompanied by a number of his officers, and not unfrequently by some of his zenana, assists; or, I should rather say, perhaps, presides; inasmuch as his presence is considered absolutely necessary to secure the divine boon. Vain, unworthy imposture! A grosser imposition was never practised upon a credulous people. As though the Deity would patiently wait the convenience of an infidel for the manifestation of his grace and miraculous power!

This ceremony takes place at midnight, and the credulous Greeks make great efforts to obtain a place near the entrance of the tomb, that they may embrace the sacred light, to which they attribute extraordinary powers. I could not give credit to the supposed divine origin of this manifestation, and, placing myself in such a position that I could see what was going on within the sanctuary, I plainly discovered it to be what I imagined,—the work of human hands. One venerable looking man, with a long white beard, rushing eagerly

forward to embrace the divine light, as he supposed it to be, the flame, which gushed out in a stream just at the moment, caught his beard, which he held forward to catch the invigorating rays, and well nigh consumed it. The poor devotee cried aloud with pain. His wife, who was at his side, shrieked with affright, and sent one of her slaves to bring some water, by which his pain was assuaged.

On Easter Sunday, when it begins to grow dark, the whole of the vast edifice is illuminated with countless wax tapers, arranged with great taste and effect, giving a light which almost equals that of day, and throwing out a heat which, added to that produced by the vast multitude assembled on the joyous festival of our Lord's resurrection, within the walls of the sacred building, is well nigh intolerable.

Nothing, however, can damp the ardour of the followers of Christ, or prevent them from offering their thanksgivings on the scene of their redemption. Whilst thousands upon thousands of lights are seen flashing below, as each rite of Christians moves along in procession, headed by its priesthood, every man carrying a taper, the galleries aloft are also filled with a thronging multitude of the higher class

of pilgrims, principally females, all arrayed, like their brethren below, in their best garments, and each carrying a taper.

The illumination being complete, one joyous alleluia bursts at once from every mouth. "Alleluia! alleluia! for the Lord our God the Almighty hath reigned!" shout forth ten thousand mouths, in holy rapture, and the massive walls tremble at the sound. All then perambulate the church in procession, each rite headed by the priests as before, who are preceded by youths bearing censers, from which issue fragrant odours, and accompanied by standard-bearers, carrying banners of various colours, illustrated by some subject taken from sacred history. During Holy Week, the usual fee, exacted from the Christian pilgrim by the Turkish government, is remitted, as an act of grace.

On the following day, I descended into the valley of Josaphat, quitting the city by St. Stephen's-gate, so called because that saint suffered martyrdom in front of it. A stone is shown, close by the gate,—where the witnesses who accused him laid their garments at the feet of Saul, before he was stoned to death. "But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly to heaven, and saw the glory

of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and he said, Behold I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God! And they, crying out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and, with one accord, ran violently upon him, and, casting him forth without the city, they stoned him; and the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man, whose name was Saul. And they stoned Stephen, invoking and saying, Lord Jesus receive my spirit! And falling on his knees, he cried with a loud voice, saying, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep in the Lord."

Descending into the valley of Josaphat by the aforesaid gate, we turned to the right, and, passing some Turkish tombs, which stand just under the wall that flanks Mount Moria, on which the Mosque of Omar now occupies the ancient site of Solomon's temple, crossed the brook of Kedron by a bridge, from which, according to tradition, Christ fell, as he was led to the house of Caiphas, on a stone, which bears two marks, believed to be the prints of our Saviour's knees. On the other side,

the foot of the Mount of Olives is thickly studded with the tombs of those devout Jews who have abandoned all, that they may come to die under the shadow of the sacred mount, on which the temple formerly stood. After seeing the tombs of Zacharias and Absalom, and the grotto where the apostles promulgated the creed, we visited the spot where our Saviour taught his disciples the Lord's Prayer. Near this was pointed out the place whence he was led, betrayed by him whom he had cherished, to suffer the death of a malefactor, that all might live.

There are still remaining a few olive trees, which are said to have been in existence in the days of our Lord's sojourn on earth. They have, indeed, a very ancient appearance; their roots being gnarled and distorted into extraordinary forms. On one of these, fertilized by the tears of the Redeemer, shed in the bitterness of his mortal anguish, I knelt and prayed fervently for some time. Before I quitted the garden, I collected a large quantity of olives, out of the stones of which I had many chaplets made, which I presented to my friends in different places, always reserving one for myself, that my

soul, as I let fall each stone and registered each prayer, might be more fully awakened to the sufferings of my Saviour.

Quitting the garden of Gethsemani, we visited the subterranean church, containing the tombs of the Blessed Virgin, St. Thomas, and St Joachim. The descent is by a flight of fifty broad marble steps. The tombs of St. Anne, the mother, and of St. Joseph, the husband of our Blessed Lady, are on the right and left of the staircase, about midway of the descent. The tomb of our Lady is at the bottom.

As we stood on the acclivity of the Holy Mount, and looked down into the awful valley below, where all the nations of the earth are to be summoned at the last dread day, our hearts were filled with fear and trembling; for we thought of the time when the tongue of scandal and malice shall be rooted out; when the heart of the worldly hypocrite shall be laid bare, and when the children of God shall stand forth in the bright light of their own innocence.

"Wherefore, O Lord!" cried the bishop, with pious fervour, "wherefore dost thou prolong our exile in this land of desolation and woe? Our

souls are become dry, by reason of the falsehood and iniquity with which the earth is filled. Vouchsafe, O Almighty Father, to hasten the time when our groaning shall be turned to hymns of joy, and our sins into deeds of grace; when the wicked shall pass away into outer darkness, and the righteous shall dwell for ever in the blessed country which thou hast prepared for them beyond the skies; to whom the Son of Man, arrayed in all his glory, shall say, 'Come, ye chosen of the Lord God, your number is complete, and the earth, which was made but for you, has ceased to be, now that every sheep has been gathered into the fold! On the earth ye were strangers; but as ye followed my footsteps in the reign of darkness and trial, so shall ye now follow me into the realms of everlasting bliss.'"

We re-crossed the brook of Kedron, and, bearing to the left, visited the fountain of Siloe, where Christ gave sight to the blind. Still bearing to the left, we went to the Bir Nami, a cistern where Nehamias concealed the sacred fire, during the Babylonian captivity. The descent into the well is made by twenty steps. When this cistern is filled to overflowing, it is looked upon as an

infallible sign of a fruitful season. Miraculous powers are still attributed to these waters, which issue with force from a rock, and have a sweet and agreeable taste. We met there some cripples on crutches, who had come to seek the healing influence of this fountain. These poor creatures saluted us with unaffected kindness, and offered us milk, which we thankfully accepted. From this point, we saw the village of Siloam, which occupied the foot of the mountain of Scandal, on the other side of the brook of Kedron; so called from the idolatries perpetrated there by Solomon.

Having filled our matāras from the sacred fount, we departed, and retraced our steps towards the north. Passing again the Turkish tombs, we directed our course to the north-western angle of the city wall; on reaching which we went to the left, and soon reached the grotto of Jeremias, where the prophet composed his sublime Lamentations. From this grotto our course lay north-west, to the sepulchre of the kings, whence we proceeded to the tombs of the prophets; after which we returned to the city, by the Bab Daoud, much fatigued with our day's journey.

I devoted one whole day to an examination of the Via Dolorosa, pausing on each spot memorable from some circumstance connected with our Saviour, in his journey from the house of Pilate, opposite the Great Temple, to Mount Calvary.

CHAPTER III.

Pilgrimage to the Jordan — Jericho—A Sheikh — Singular Occurrence—The Holy River—A Catastrophe—The Pride of Dress—Return to Jerusalem—Letter from the Emir Beschir.

HAVING learned that the annual pilgrimage to the Jordan was about to take place, I determined to form part of it. One evening we left Jerusalem in a body, amounting, I should say, to ten thousand souls, headed by the governor, and escorted by his guards. After a journey of eight hours, over as wild and desolate a tract of country as it is possible for the imagination to conceive, and in many parts of which we were in no small danger of breaking our necks, from the rough and precipitous nature of the road, we arrived at Rihhah, a village erected, according to some, on the ruins of Jericho. Not

far from this spot the fountain was pointed out to us, the waters of which were sweetened at the intercession of the Prophet Elias. It issues from a rock, on the summit of which Christ passed forty days and forty nights, fasting and praying. We saw there the remains of a church, built to commemorate this event. Ascending to the summit of this rock, we had an excellent view of the country formerly possessed by the Amorites.

Having filled our matāras from the sacred fountain we descended into the plain to our tents, which were pitched just opposite the place where Jericho anciently stood. A Bedouin sheikh, who was one of the escort under the command of the governor, pitched his tent close by the side of ours, and we soon established a friendly intercourse; for the kind and warm-hearted treatment which I had experienced from the Dryaah tribe, had produced a powerful and lasting impression on my mind in favour of these noble-hearted and simple-minded children of nature. From my intercourse with these people also, I had made myself thoroughly acquainted with the Arabic, as spoken by the Bedouins, which differs materially from that used in

towns and cities, so that we could converse with facility.

From our tent I saw this sheikh invite a poor brother Bedouin, who must otherwise have gone without the meal, to share his dinner. As they were on the point of concluding their repast, a second Bedouin, who from his appearance seemed in no better plight than the other, passed by the tent, and was asked in to finish what was left. "Eat," said the hospitable sheikh, "till ye be satisfied, for such is the will of God."

This generous Bedouin was from the Haouran. He was of the middle stature, strong and well knit, with a frame admirably adapted to endure fatigue; he wore a large aaba, of white, with blue stripes; and the arms carried by himself, and those of his tribe who accompanied him, consisted of a matchlock, lance, and dagger; some carried swords. The Arabs of the Haouran are a mild and courteous people, of a totally opposite character from the Jericho Arabs, who, from their ferocious manner and aspect, are fit inhabitants of a district which, from the earliest times, has been the scene of rapine and violence.

The sheikh's wife was one of the handsomest

Bedouin women I ever met with. Her eyes were magnificent, black as jet, soft and feminine, and yet full of fire; her hair was perfectly black, and so luxuriant that it descended, in long braids, almost to her feet. This mode of wearing the hair, so different from that prevailing amongst the tribes with which I had previously been acquainted, appeared to be the fashion in these parts; for I had seen several Bedouin girls, most of whom were pretty and well formed, with their tresses arranged after this fashion.

The sheikh insisted on entertaining me at dinner, and made great preparations for the occasion; killing more sheep, fowls, and pigeons, than we could possibly have required, had our number been doubled. After an excellent repast, the sheikh had our carpets, which were of the finest Persian manufacture—I did not think it necessary to enquire too minutely how he came by them—brought in front of the tent, and seating ourselves upon them, we enjoyed our raliouns with infinite relish; for my new friend belonged to a class of Bedouins who are by no means bound to observe the ascetic and self-denying discipline which prevails amongst my old acquaintances on the banks of the Euphrates.

As I sat enjoying my ralioun, my thoughts wandering back to the events narrated in the Old Testament, until I almost fancied I beheld the Jews led by their priests, each bearing a lamp, and thought I heard the ponderous walls of Jericho fall with one stupendous crash, I saw a Bedouin woman running towards us, carrying something wrapped in her zail, or apron.

She approached us, and to my astonishment, I perceived it to be a new-born child. She had, we found, been suddenly overtaken by the pains of labour, while working in the fields. Without any assistance, she had given birth to the infant; which, after having washed in the Jordan, she was hastening home to present it to her husband.

How would the mothers of what are called civilized cities have conducted themselves, if unexpectedly thrown into so perilous and frightful a situation?

The singularity of this occurrence, induced me to ask the Bedouin female whom I have just described, some particulars respecting their mode of rearing their children. She told me that they washed their infants every day in cold water, and, for the first month, bound their arms across in front, to prevent

them from doing themselves mischief. Under their arms, and on all their joints, they put a sweet-smelling earth called "akhmar," mingled with a herb called "as," dried and reduced to powder; a mixture which is supposed to fortify the skin against the baneful influence of the burning climate. They regularly dip them in the river every morning, during forty days. By this mode of treatment, they are able to walk before they are eight months old.

The plain here was well cultivated, and numbers of camels, cattle, and sheep, were seen grazing in the fields around us. The inhabitants brought us poultry, eggs, and fruit, in abundance. I asked them for some flowers; and they presented me with some of the most beautiful roses I ever beheld.

From the site of ancient Jericho to the banks of the Jordan, was but a short journey. It was, therefore, not long before my eyes were blessed with the sight of the holy stream, which I had so ardently sighed to behold, winding its blue serpentine course through the green pastures which line its banks. At length we pitched our tents close to the river, which, at that time, was flowing with considerable rapidity; as I judged from its troubled surface, broken into innumerable short waves, and spinning

whirlpools. As far as we could see, its banks were shaded with groves of weeping willows.

Our tent was scarcely pitched before I hastened, burning with impatience, to bathe in the sacred river. I had provided myself with a long bathing dress and trousers of silk, in common with my fellow pilgrims, who all—at least all who could afford it—had come supplied with a similar habiliment. This dress, having been worn on this awful occasion, every pious pilgrim preserves with religious care, as a precious relic, for the rest of his life; reserving it, untouched, and uncontaminated by any water less holy, for his winding sheet, when he is called to quit this world of vanity and woe.

Having put off my travelling dress in my tent, and slipped on my bathing costume, I sought the river's bank, and plunged fearlessly in; for I was an expert swimmer, and had been accustomed from my infancy to bathe in a reservoir as large as the interior of Portman Square, and twenty feet deep. I had, however, not reckoned on the rapid current which at that time carried the water eddying down with violence into the Dead Sea, and which I found so powerful that it required the exertion of all my strength and skill to escape being carried away. I

made, however, a vigorous struggle, and, by the blessing of the Almighty, succeeded in gaining the opposite shore.

Indeed, when I look back on my past life, and reflect on the many narrow escapes I have had from imminent death, it almost seems as though a special Providence watched over my safety. How many dangerous falls have I had, in early youth, from high trees? How many times have I been dashed down the sides of steep and rugged rocks, by the falling of my horse in climbing the sides of precipitous mountains? Once, when I was about to mount a white camel of extraordinary height, which I was in the habit of riding, the animal suddenly rose from its knees just as I had put one foot in the stirrup, and threw me headforemost down the bank of the Euphrates, into the river.

On another occasion, like a young madcap as I was, I mounted for a frolic, on the hump of a half-broken young hajeen, or dromedary, without either saddle or bridle. I was no sooner on his back, than he started off, and flew over the ground like a whirlwind. I managed to keep my seat for some time; but at length he threw me with great violence on a dwarf tree, by which I was so dreadfully stunned,

that all my friends considered me dead; besides which, my left cheek was laid completely open, leaving a deep scar, which I shall carry to my grave. More than once has death stared me in the face, in the shape of the destroying sword. Heaven above knows, who has preserved me through so many dangers and vicissitudes—through so many sorrows and afflictions—for what fate I am reserved! As yet, this world has been to me indeed a vale of tears—the abiding place of desolation. I may say with Petrarc,—Da poi ch'i'nacqui in su la riva d'Arno, cercando or questa ed or quell' altra parte, non è stata mia vita altro ch'affanno.

But, to return to my story, and spare the reader from mere selfish chafings against the decrees of an Allwise Providence. I succeeded, by dint of extraordinary exertion, in crossing the river; the width of which, as nearly as I could judge, was, at that time, about a hundred and twenty feet. At some seasons, it is still less, and its course languid and sluggish. Having reached the other side of the river, I cut a beautiful cane which grew by the bank, and carried it back in triumph to the point from which I had started; thus repeating my feat. Before I repaired to my tent to divest myself of my bathing dress, I collected a quantity of pebbles

from the strand, sufficient to fill a capacious bag, to carry away with me as relics to present to my friends.

Amongst the Makdessiah, was a Greek from Constantinople; a man of some wealth, who, together with his wife, had joined the caravan from Jerusalem. Both entered the Jordan at the same instant that I plunged in. Perceiving that the woman was terrified at the strength and rapidity of the current, I volunteered to carry her some distance out into the river in my arms; to which she consented. While I was occupied in rendering assistance to the wife, the husband struck out, and dashed across towards the opposite shore. He was, to all appearance, a practised swimmer; but he had scarcely gained the other side before he cried aloud for help, and, ere any one could swim to his assistance, entirely disappeared. His poor wife uttered the most heart-rending cries, on beholding his desperate state; and hearing his piteous calls for help, would fain have rushed to his aid; but knowing that it would have been but the sacrifice of another life, I would not permit her, but carried the poor heart-broken creature ashore, in violent hysterics. Countless numbers were instantly on the spot where he was seen to disappear, and, for two hours, every

search was made, but without success; at the end of which time the body was at length found. This melancholy accident cast a gloom on the otherwise joyous proceedings of the day. Some of our fellow pilgrims told me that the Greek, although a good swimmer, had been indulging rather too freely either in wine or spirits; which, besides robbing him of his skill, had made him reckless of consequences.

We mounted at sunrise the following day, having all filled our matāras from the Jordan, but before our departure, I sought a solitary spot on the river's bank, and falling on my knees, remained long absorbed in prayer and meditation on the benign accents which once rung on the sacred stream beneath, from the lips of the Eternal Father, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;" renewing the promises of my baptism, abjuring Satan and all his works, and registering a vow to walk in the paths of God, to the end of my days.

Our route now lay southerly, towards the Dead Sea, which we gained after a short journey. Never, so long as I live, shall I forget the scene of abiding desolation that presented itself! Here the heavy

hand of Divine wrath has, indeed, left an enduring mark, which defies the petty devices of man. The earth about the Dead Sea is encrusted with salt, and is of so soft a nature, that our horses sank to their knees in traversing it. On our right were hills of the most grotesque and fantastic forms, some resembling pyramids, and others the towers of fortified cities.

The soldiers of our escort ran to bathe in the water; making their ablutions after the mode prescribed in the Koran. Although I was told that, by diving, the remains of the city of Zoar might be seen, I felt no inclination to bathe in the death-like waters, so different from the vivifying stream in which I had, not many hours before, disported. Nor could I reconcile it to myself to pollute those limbs, which had so recently been cleansed, as it were, with the waters of regeneration, by bringing them in contact with the stagnant pool, which holds entombed the burnt and blackened habitations of men, whose awful iniquity brought down upon them and their families, the consuming wrath of the Almighty.

Having reached the extent of our intended pilgrimage, we retraced our steps to Jerusalem, by

the same stern and rugged road by which we had departed from it; now picking our dangerous path along the rough edge of a narrow ridge of rocks, where the least false step would have dashed us into the abyss below; and now toiling, with weary steps, up the dry bed of some torrent. Around us was frowning desolation, and nearly the only living creatures we beheld were large hungry eagles in great numbers eddying far above into the regions of air.

Some of the crags were moulded into the most uncouth and fantastic shapes. One group, in particular, on the parched side of which a few sickly flowers had struggled into a brief existence, dying almost as soon as they burst forth into life, has often recurred vividly to my recollection, in some of the great cities of Europe; where I have seen women, of an age when the yearnings and thoughts of their hearts should be turned to graver and better things, intent only on the decoration of their persons, and still vainly imagining themselves capable of exciting the admiration of the other sex, and the envy of their own; perfectly unconscious that while all their efforts pass unheeded by the one, they serve as a passing jest, or, perhaps, afford

more enduring food for the malignity of the other.

Such things I have seen in the temples of God, and I have then thought of the women of my own country. In youth, they are proud of their charms, and vie with each other in the splendour of the ornaments by which they strive to set them off; but, even at this period of life, their display is confined to their husbands, to their relations; their trappings are not like those of their camels and horses, for the immodest stare of a curious crowd. But when the sun of their days begins to decline, they put away all thoughts of outward show, confining themselves to that which is indispensable for cleanliness and comfort, devoting their minds to serious contemplation, and preparing their souls to depart the flesh in peace, and present themselves before their eternal Judge. Which is the more dignified picture, that of the so-styled civilized daughters of Europe, addicted even in old age to vanity and pride, and, though flying from the unfortunate, constantly occupied in the pursuit of pleasure, or that of the humble matron of the oppressed and sinking Christian of the East, devoting herself to acts of kindness towards the sick, the

poor, and the distressed, wherever they are to be found.

Instances, such as I have described, I have witnessed. In my own country, I believe, there are none such. My astonishment must therefore find its excuse in the novelty, to me, of the phenomenon. I should be guilty of ingratitude, were I to indulge in indiscriminate censure on the inhabitants of European cities; more especially of that in which I have the good fortune now to reside, from individuals amongst whom,—whose names my Oriental frankness would tempt me to divulge, did I not know that their generosity I might, even say their princely magnanimity, is only surpassed by their anxiety to have their good deeds remain unnoticed,—I have received favours which no efforts of mine can repay, and the recollection of which will last to the end of my days, were they to endure for a thousand years.

We reached Jerusalem about one hour after noon, and found the roads crowded with a vast multitude, who hailed the return of our caravan with shouts of welcome and songs of joy.

On my return to the Holy City, I found the following letter from the Emir Beschir, the Great

Prince of Lebanon, for whose name I had always entertained a great veneration, knowing that he was regarded as one of the strongholds of Christianity in the East. It was written to me by the good Emir in consequence of letters which he had received from his daughter and the Armenian Patriarch, acquainting his highness of the evil destiny to which I had been a victim:—

"*To the Presence of the Noble and Honourable Lady Maria Teresa Asmar.*

"May God take her under his especial care!—We have greatly desired to behold your distinguished person in health, and in the enjoyment of every happiness. May the abounding grace of God descend from Heaven upon your head!

"Intelligence has reached us of your arrival in our territories, as well as of the misfortunes and persecutions which have befallen your family and your uncle, Mar Basilius Asmar, Archbishop of Diarbekir, an illustrious and noble prelate.

"We have learned that you entertain the project of taking up your abode in some convent situated in our mountains, and spending your life in some solitude in our dominions.

"We hope to have an opportunity of doing you due honour, in the first instance, within the precincts of our palace, and we will then occupy ourselves in making the arrangements necessary to meet your desires.

"At all events, we pray you to lose no time in coming straightway to our palace; for our daughter, the Sitte Hadouch, who is now an inmate of our harem, greatly longs to behold you, and has besought us, with much fervour, to write to invite you here,—an invitation which we hope you will not hesitate long to accept.

"May your life be prolonged!

(signed) "Beschir El Shehabi."

My breast was filled with gratitude at the disinterested kindness of the illustrious Prince, to an unfortunate lonely stranger, who had nothing to offer in return for his hospitality but the grateful feelings of a warm and sincere heart; and I wrote an answer, accepting his invitation, as soon as I should have completed my pilgrimage.

CHAPTER IV.

Journey to Bethlehem—The Tomb of Rachael—Grotto of St. Eusebius—The Tombs of the Innocents—The Grotto of the Nativity—The Cisterns of Solomon—The Birth-place and Village of St. John—The Prince of Lebanon—Legend of the Temple of Solomon—The Mosque of Omar—Interior of the Mosque—The Jewish Synagogue—Return to Jaffa—Eastern Hospitality—Departure for Mount Carmel—Cesarea—Attack of Banditti.

On the following day, I quitted Jerusalem by the Bethlehem gate, in company with a caravan of about two or three hundred pilgrims, for Bethlehem,—Beit el lāham, meaning, in the Arabic, the house of meat, and in the Chaldean, and Hebrew, the house of bread. I was mounted on so spirited a charger, that I had little leisure to observe the scenery, or to deliver myself up to the meditation befitting the occasion, knowing that I was about to behold the place where the Blessed Virgin gave birth to the Saviour of mankind. I

therefore exchanged my fiery steed for an ass, and ambled along at a gentle pace.

After an hour's ride, we came to the convent of Mar (St) Elias, where we were shown the stone which the prophet Elias used for his bed. From the Deir Mar Elias, our path lay across the plains of Rephaim, where David overcame the Philistines; and not far from Bethlehem the tomb of Rachel was pointed out to us, at a short distance on the right hand side of the road, covered in a little pavilion.

In a little more than two hours, we reached Bethlehem, and went straight to the convent,—a large building, presenting, in its exterior, somewhat the appearance of a fortress. It is divided into three parts; one of which is held by the Latins, another by the Greeks, and the third by the Armenians. We entered the ponderous gate by a small wicket, and were led into a splendid church, supported on each side by a double row of marble pillars, nearly twenty feet high. Hence we were conducted to the grottos beneath. Passing the grotto of St. Eusebius, and several others, the names of which I have forgotten, we were shown the spot where St. Jerome passed nearly his whole life. There the pious saint abided patiently;—the dread blast of the

trumpet which is to call all mankind to judgment, continually sounding in his ears; there with stones he beat his breast, drooping with the weight of years and continued austerities. While looking on this grotto, I remembered how often I myself had, in distant and humble imitation of the saint, whose life I was in the constant habit of reading, also smitten my breast with stones. Here also the Saint taught the people and little children.

From the grotto of St. Jerome, we went to the grotto of the Innocents. All these grottos are ornamented with paintings. The most important sanctuary of all, the birth-place of our Redeemer, we reserved for the last. The descent is made by a narrow staircase of thirty steps, divided into two flights of fifteen steps each. The grotto of the Nativity itself, a small cavern, about thirty-seven feet long, twelve wide, and about ten high, is covered with marble, the work of the holy Empress Helen, and decorated with sculpture and paintings. Thirty-two massive and elegantly chased silver lamps are here kept continually burning. The spot where our Saviour was born is under a handsome altar, fixed against the wall, and supported by marble columns. It is marked by a slab of white marble, inlaid with

jasper, in the midst of which is a silver star, with rays like the sun, about a foot in diameter, round which are written these words:—"HIC DE VIRGINE MARIA JESUS CHRISTUS NATUS EST." The altar is lighted by ten lamps. Exactly over this spot, the star which conducted the wise men to the birthplace of our Saviour is said to have become stationary. A few paces from the altar, is the place where the manger stood, in which Christ was placed on the straw. It is slightly lower than the floor of the grotto; it is covered with white marble. Facing the manger is an altar erected on the spot where the Virgin sat with the infant Jesus on her knee, when the Magi came to offer their adoration.

I prostrated myself on my face upon the spot where the Saviour of the world first took upon him the flesh, and shed a flood of grateful tears, pouring forth my soul in thanksgiving for my redemption, and delivered it up to the contemplation of the holy scenes which I was about to witness, and singing to myself a canticle I had learned in my youth, in which the Virgin Mary is described as addressing the infant Jesus, as he reclines on her lap, in this strain:—

"Must I approach thee, bearing in my hand

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incense; or shall I offer thee the milk of my breasts? Shall I cherish thee as a mother, or must I humble myself in the dust, and minister to thee on my bended knee? The Heavens are thy seat, and the earth is thy footstool, and yet in my lap do I cradle thee. Thou art on the earth, and yet art thou not divided from the dwellers in Heaven. Oh! who hath seen a mighty king lying amongst the oxen? For thus is it written, from among the oxen shall come the lion of Judah. I call thee child, and yet the Heavens adore thee; I call thee poor and destitute, and thou art the Creator of all, and the Author of all good things, by which all live that have life. Teach me then how to call thee."

We stayed three days at Bethlehem. The two last we spent in going over the places of note in the neighbourhood.

Amongst other objects of interest, we visited the cisterns of Solomon, three in number, ranged one above another, each communicating with the other by conduits, and all progressively increasing in size; the largest being five hundred feet long, two hundred wide, and twenty deep; although I believe the width and depth to be the same in all. At the

corner of each is a flight of steps. The words of their wise projector came forcibly to my mind:— "And when I turned myself to all the works which my hands had wrought, and to the labours wherein I had laboured in vain, I saw in all things vanity and vexation of mind, and that nothing was lasting under the sun." * * * "I hated all my application wherewith I had earnestly laboured under the sun; being like to have an heir after me, whom I know not whether he will be a wise man or a fool; and he shall have rule over all my labours, with which I have laboured and been solicitous; and is there anything so vain? Alas! I know not." True, O wisest of Kings! for even thy wisdom could not have imagined into what hands thy mighty works would fall.

In the course of our explorations, we visited also the tombs of the prophet Amos; the convent of the Holy Cross, so called because it stands on the spot whence the tree was cut down by the Jews, to form the cross on which our Lord suffered; and the church built where the house of Zacharias stood, in which St. John the Baptist was born. The place of his nativity is ornamented with magnificent bas reliefs, representing the birth of St. John and the

baptism of our Saviour, and having this inscription, —"HIC PRECURSOR DOMINI NATUS EST."

We visited also the valley of Terebintha, which abounded in olives, pomegranates, and figs, where Saul halted at the head of the Jewish host, and saw the brook from which David picked the stone with which he slew Goliath. Before we quitted St. John of the Desert we ascended the mountain on which Zacharias had a dwelling, and passed through the village, called the village of St. John the Baptist, which the Blessed Virgin visited frequently.

On the site of this rural abode of Zacharias, St. Helen, the empress, afterwards established a convent of nuns, which has been destroyed by the Turks;—considerable ruins now occupy the spot. Here we were shown a bank overshadowed by huge trees, on which our Lady and St. Elisabeth were frequently in the habit of reclining. Here the inhabitants brought us some olives, plucked from the trees which grow in such abundance in the country around St. John of the Desert, and which we found very delicious. It was on this bank that the Blessed Mary is reported to have chaunted the Canticle, "Magnificat anima mea Dominum."

The women whom I saw at Bethlehem and in

the villages around it wore dresses of red and blue; some having the khamis blue and the abba red, and others reversing the arrangement. The appearance of some of these Bethlemites has frequently been brought to my recollection, on seeing the paintings of some of the old Italian masters; who seem to have been fond of this contrast in their delineation of sacred subjects. I was assured that the Bethlemite shepherds of this day are dressed in exactly the same manner as their ancestors as far back as the Christian era, or even farther. I found in the customs prevailing amongst this people many points of resemblance with the usages of my own country. Here, as in Assyria and Chaldea, betrothals take place at a very early age, and women taken in adultery are, as in the olden time, stoned to death.

Having seen all the remarkable places around Bethlehem, I returned to Jerusalem, to make the necessary arrangements for my approaching visit to the Prince of the Lebanon. We reached the city in time to dine with our host the Hawajah of Aleppo, whom we found in high spirits, and strongly disposed to do his best to make his friends and visitors happy.

After dinner, he told us a singular story connected with Mount Moria before the building of the temple; which, I believe, is a favourite legend among the Arabs, by whom the facts contained in it are implicity believed. The tale ran thus:—

"Two brothers possessed a large field, which they had inherited from their mother, on the top of Mount Moria, by both of whom it was tilled with equal industry, and each of whom took his fair proportion of the produce. One of these brothers had taken to himself a wife, who had borne him many children, and whose well-being and happiness formed the sole object of his existence. The other brother had neither wife nor child, but dwelt in his habitation alone.

Every summer, when the corn became ripe, the two brothers went into the field at reaping time, and laboured with equal diligence till the whole crop was fairly bound up into sheaves and set up, in two stacks of equal size, in the middle of the field; one stack for each brother. About eventide, they quitted their labour and went each to his own house.

Now, the brother who was unmarried was a lover of justice, and would not that he himself should be

enriched by the impoverishment of his kindred. As he lay on his bed he thus reasoned with himself: —'My brother has taken unto himself a wife, who has borne him many children, whom he must feed and clothe and bring up before the face of God. I am alone; I have neither wife nor child. I need but little to provide me with food and raiment. How, then, can it be just that I should take an equal portion of the field with my brother, who hath many mouths to feed? For if I keep the corn, of which I have no need, shall it not rot in my storehouse, or be devoured by vermin? If I sell the corn, to what purpose shall I put the money; seeing that I have no need of it? If I bury it in the earth, what shall it profit me; and if I put it at usury, shall not my bones howl from my grave in the night season, after I am dead? I will arise and go into the field and take from the stack which is set up for me forty sheaves, and put them on the stack of my brother; so that both he and I may have sufficient.'

"So saying, he arose and went into the field before it was day, and took from his own stack forty sheaves, and put them on the stack of his brother, and returned again to his bed. Now the brother

who was married, was also a just man, in whose heart was gentleness and love. While, therefore the one was out in the field, the other brother thus spoke to his wife:—'My heart is sore grieved because of the lonely condition of my brother, who hath neither wife nor children to console him in sickness or misfortune. Who, then, shall give him succour? I will go into the field and take forty sheaves from my stack and put them on that of my brother, who will not know from whom the increase comes, and so cannot therefore, refuse it.' So he went and did as he had told his wife, and it was not yet dawn when he returned again to the side of his wife.

"Now, when it was day, both the brothers were astonished to see the two stacks just as they had left them the day before, and wondered greatly how this miracle might have come to pass. But as each was determined to see accomplished the desire of his own heart, they both continued for many nights to add to each other's stack forty sheaves. At last both resolved to watch all night, so that they might solve this mystery, for their souls were troubled. But when each saw the love his brother bore him, they fell on each other's neck, and glorified God.

"Therefore, when a place was sought whereon to build a temple to the Most High, it was thought that no spot could be found more acceptable to the Author of all goodness and virtue than the scene of such pure intentions and brotherly love; and the field of the two brothers was chosen as the site of the Temple of Solomon."

When our host had brought his legend to an end, the conversation naturally turned on the building which now occupies the site on which the Temple of Solomon formerly stood.

A Christian, who was one of the party, told us that he had one day disguised himself as a Turk, prompted by a dangerous curiosity, and had obtained an entrance into the interior of the mosque of Omar. He assured us that some remains of the ancient Jewish temple are still to be seen there: he did not, however, enter into any minute description. The same gentleman promised to obtain for us admission into the house of a Mussulman friend of his, from the windows of which an excellent view could be obtained of the interior of the mosque, and the splendid marble court, studded with Mussulman praying places, of a beautiful and airy style of architecture; which court itself is flanked on the north by

another vast enclosure, containing also many praying places, and separated from the marble paved court, which is raised some feet above it, by a wall, in which are several highly ornamental entrances with light and elegant arches, supported on columns, and approached by flights of steps.

The penalty which a Christian incurs who dares to intrude even within the precincts of the marble paved enclosure, in the midst of which the mosque stands, is, as is well known, either death or an immediate adoption of the faith of Mahomet. This rigorous decree is said to have had its origin in the declaration of a Mahometan prophet, that whatever a Christian shall ask of the Almighty within the precincts of the holy temple will infallibly be granted. The Moslems, therefore, feeling assured that a Christian's first prayer would, in all probability, be for the downfall of the faith of Islam, and the destruction of its votaries, forbid the entrance of any of the hated sect, lest by these means they should share the fate of the ancient dwellers in Jerusalem, and become outcasts upon the face of the earth.

I was told that, once upon a time, a Christian of some consequence obtained a firman from the

Sultan, granting him permission to enter the forbidden sanctuary. With this order he straightway proceeded to Jerusalem, and presented it in due form to the Pasha. After keeping his eyes stedfastly fixed on the firman for some time, the Pasha at length said, "It is true, Christian, that I am here commanded to grant thee an entrance into the holy temple, but I find it nowhere ordered, that I should let thee out again. If, therefore, thou insistest upon entering the mosque, I am ready to fulfil the instructions contained in this firman; but, by the beard of the holy prophet, I swear that thou shalt never more behold the outside of it."

The Christian, however, was not to be turned from his purpose, and requested the governor to execute the orders contained in the firman, by which he obtained an entrance into the mosque, but never issued forth again to tell its wonders.

The Turks affirm, that the mosque of Omar contains a stone miraculously suspended between heaven and earth.

We remained half an hour at the windows contemplating the mosque and the beautiful enclosure in which it stands, and then returned to dinner. We afterwards took a stroll into the valley of Josa-

phat, and were much moved by the genuine grief exhibited by some Moslem women in the Turkish cemetery at the foot of Mount Moria, which was truly affecting, and as far removed as possible from the mere outward semblance of woe. They had pitched their tents hard by the graves of those dear relatives, husbands, fathers, brothers, or sisters, whose loss they deplored, and had brought baskets of flowers and sweet smelling incense to strew over their tombs. The Mahometans believe that the dead are conscious of the grateful attentions bestowed on them by their surviving friends.

We sat watching with intense interest their proceedings, until the sun had gone down, and the moon, which arose in a clear cloudless sky, making the night light as day, tempted us still further to delay our departure.

As we sat enjoying the beautiful and tranquil scene, which gradually increased in splendour as the moon rose to the zenith, giving to the veils of the Turkish mourners an unearthly whiteness, and making the polished tiles on the great mosque of Omar, above us, to glisten like diamonds, I heard in the stillness a piercing cry, somewhat between the voice of a child and the howl of a dog. Startled

by the suddenness of the sound, and ignorant of its cause, I applied to my companions for information, who, one and all, gravely assured me, that the cries issued from the graves of usurers who had died in their iniquity, and whose spirits could not rest quiet in their graves. On hearing the sound repeated, however, I at once recognised it be the cry of a wawia, the animal with which I had had so fearful an encounter at the convent in the Lebanon.

The following day I spent in the company of a tolerably numerous party, about twenty in all, friends of the Howajah, on the Mount of Olives, where we pitched a tent, and had our dinner prepared by the servants of our host.

After we had despatched our meal I retired to a spot at some distance from the party, a little higher up the mountain, and with the holy city, in all its length and breadth, under my eye, I began to sing some of the Psalms of David. Filled with enthusiasm, and seeing before my eyes the holy Sion, in praise of which the psalmist has poured forth such divine strains, out of the fulness of his inspired heart, I continued to sing till evening was drawing near, and exhaustion and a burning thirst compelled me reluctantly to desist.

On reaching our tent I immediately asked for water; but none was to be procured, the negroes having emptied all the mattara previously to packing them up for our departure. I was absolutely dying with thirst, and found myself incapable of journeying homeward without moistening my parched lips. Espying a Turkish house hard by a mosque, I went in and begged a draught of water; but the master of the dwelling, with ready kindness, immediately accommodated me with coffee, sherbet, and a pipe, which I accepted with grateful thanks, and returned home with my party, after once more visiting, probably for the last time in my life, the place from which the ascension of our Saviour took place.

On the following day, I obtained permission to spend the night, the last of my stay in Jerusalem, in the holy sepulchre. There kneeling beside the cold stone on which was laid the body of the crucified Redeemer, I delivered myself up to prayer and meditation, wrapped in an ecstacy which no words can describe, and almost fancying that I saw the Saviour again visiting the last scene of his career in the flesh. I wept for my past sins, and prayed earnestly for forgiveness; imploring the Almighty

to grant me strength to resist the temptations of the world, so that I might walk pure in soul before the face of the Lord for the rest of my days.

I offered up a fervent prayer to the Giver of Grace, for the soul of my dear departed parents, that it might please God to deliver the faithful, who dwell in the country of our Lord's ministration, from their bonds, and shed the saving light of truth upon the darkness which is in the soul of the schismatic and the Moslem. Had it so pleased the Almighty, how readily could I have died beside that holy tomb!—but the will of the Lord be done!

I could not think of quitting Jerusalem without paying a visit to its chief synagogue, the most remarkable temple of Jewish worship in the world. Accordingly, on the Saturday preceding my departure I went there, and remained during the service. I had heard such extravagant tales of the magnificence of this building, that, I must confess, I was greatly disappointed at its poor and mean appearance; for it is far more poor and more mean than any I remember to have seen in Chaldea.

Had it been, however, the gorgeous temple which Solomon raised to the Almighty, its walls could not have enclosed a more fervent and devout congre-

gation. The Pentateuch reposed in a recess, which was approached with great reverence; and in the front of it a number of lamps were suspended. These, I was informed, are never extinguished.

This high respect paid to the sacred book is alike found in the Jewish and the Christian communities of the East. How well do I remember that my beloved father, when he had finished reading a portion of it, never failed to kiss it devoutly, and carry it to a place appropriated to its exclusive keeping. The same practice I know to be prevalent in all the Christian families with whom I have been intimate in all parts of the East. It is considered sacrilegious, and even impious, to place any other book, and especially one treating of worldly concerns, upon it. The reader of these pages will, therefore, not be surprised to learn the astonishment, amounting almost to horror, with which I was struck when, upon my first introduction to European society, I beheld the sacred volume vilified and desecrated, and cast carelessly in a heap amidst idle romances, and peradventure works, the object of which was to bring into derision the holy religion, to which it is the guide.

Upon one occasion, when I was in France, on

giving vent to these natural feelings of indignation in a mixed company, I was laughed at, and assured by an individual who, as I was told, had the reputation of being a philosopher and a man of science, that the Bible was a pure fiction, the invention of men of warm imaginations, intent on practising upon the credulity of their fellow-creatures; and, in support of this assertion, he insisted that the era of the creation of the world, as given in the book of Moses, had been proved to be false, the world having been in existence thousands of years before. Fruitless science! vain philosophy! will it add a day to the life of its possessor, or save him from the tomb, where the fullness of his pride will be turned to emptiness, and the light of his worldly knowledge into the darkness of eternity? Oh, philosopher! thou deservest the candid compliment of Cicero, "Nihil tam absurde dictum est quod non dicatur ab aliqus philosophorum."

Having provided ourselves with a large number of chaplets and crosses to serve as presents to our Christian friends, we took an affectionate leave of the hospitable Howajah and the lady, Susan Khatoon, who had been my travelling companion from Bagdad, who had decided on remaining for some time at Jerusalem. The Howajah kindly furnished

us with letters of recommendation to the Haznadār, or treasurer of the Pasha of Acre, and likewise others to persons to whom he was known at Nazareth and Saida.

The bishop, Deir Stefān, who had journeyed with the lady and myself from Bagdad, accompanied the caravan, amounting to about three hundred persons, with which I was about to proceed to Nazareth and Mount Carmel, on my way to the Lebanon. Accordingly we hired two horses for ourselves, and two mules to carry our baggage, tents, cooking apparatus, &c. We paid fifty piastres for each horse, and thirty for each mule, this expense including the services of the "katerchia," or muleteers, whose duty it was to load and unload our beasts, to pitch, strike, and pack our tents, and replenish our mataras, or water skins.

Besides the katerchia we had each a domestic servant to cook our food, and attend generally to our various wants. We were provided with a stock of basterma, a kind of dried sausage meat, of beef or mutton, mingled with spices, salted and dried, and eaten either raw or broiled; kāorma, beef or mutton cut into pieces, and cooked in its own fat, mingled with salt, spices, and savory herbs, which keeps for a length of time; Cyprus cheese,

which is delicious when roasted; rice, dates, and other dry provisions. On reaching the different villages, however, we generally contrived to procure some lamb and poultry, which were soon cooked on a fire of sticks, kindled in a temporary fire-place constructed with loose stone.

On approaching Jaffa, we heard a rumour that the plague had shown itself in the town, and we therefore determined not to enter the walls, but to encamp in one of the fields around it. Here we were soon visited by our friends in the town, to whom intelligence had been forwarded of our arrival, and who immediately came forth to meet us, bringing with them presents of a most acceptable kind, such as lambs and fowls, besides a great abundance of the delicious fruits of Jaffa (food fit for the dwellers in Paradise), bahmia and "ardeshāouk," artichokes (literally, "thorn of the earth"), as large as a good sized pumpkin, and other vegetables. Jaffa produces no fewer than two-and-thirty different kinds of figs.

It must, indeed, have been a friendly feeling which could induce even eastern Christians to communicate personally with each other, at a moment when one of the parties came from a quarter in which infection was supposed to exist; for nothing

can exceed the precaution which is taken to avoid pestilence. On the first rumour that the plague is abroad, they shut themselves up in their houses, and refuse all communication from without. Before their doors are placed large receptacles filled with water, into which food and every thing intended for the use of the inmates are dropped. The windows and all openings are so carefully closed, that it is impossible even for a cat to enter.

These precautions draw down upon the Christians the unmeasured contempt of the Turks, who take no precautions whatever, but frequent their coffee-houses as usual, and trust themselves entirely to Providence, whose decrees they hold as irrevocable, and not to be turned aside by the cunning of man. I have frequently heard a Moslem say,—"Nisrāni kafir! yēherub min entakām Allah?"—"The unbelieving Christian! thinks he to escape the wrath of God?" "W'hal heitān elhājar tākdar tekhfihom min elkādr ala kuleshei?"—"And shall stone walls shield him from the eye of the Almighty?"

At dinner we were joined by the Howajah Yusuf of Jaffa, in whose house we had been so hospitably entertained on our way to Jerusalem. He came by invitation, bringing with him his wife and some friends. As our party was tolerably large, num-

bering in all twenty-five persons, we found it impossible to accommodate every one in our tent; accordingly, selecting the prettiest spot we could find in a neighbouring field, we spread our table there. Two sheep were killed, besides a number of fowls, and we made every exertion to entertain our guests in a becoming manner. To my great joy, the Hawajah Yusuf brought with him a box of delicious manna, of the genuine kind, which falls from the sky like snow in the months of April and May on a tree somewhat resembling the tea-plant, a delicacy which I had not tasted since I had quitted my native land, where it often formed my favourite nourishment.

The remains of the feast were given to the poor Bedouins about the camp; and our guests, after a mutual interchange of blessings, bade us adieu, offering up ardent prayers for our safety.

On the morrow we rose before the sun, and by sunrise the whole caravan was in a bustle, tents striking, camels loading, and horses saddling, for our departure for Mount Carmel.

After a journey of ten hours we pitched our tents not far from the little village of Mukhallid, which was on our right, and presented a sufficiently wretched appearance. Here, having spread our

carpets, we reposed from our fatigues, until supper could be got ready.

After supper the moon rose in all her splendour, the sky was without a cloud, the sea without a ripple, and not a sound broke on the soft stillness of the night, as we sat calmly smoking our nerghilas, till our Bedouin katerchia, having finished their supper, began as usual to entertain each other with tales, interspersed with jokes, which seemed to have great point, to judge from the peals of laughter which ever and anon broke forth from the group.

Shortly after they removed into an adjoining field, and amused themselves with dancing, and singing some of Aantar's famous songs of love and valour, while I was solitarily in the tent enjoying my nerghila.

There was one among them from Damietta, who had one of the most touching voices I ever heard. He breathed forth the following verse from one of Aantar's love songs, in tones of such tender melancholy, awakened so many recellections of friends and kindred from whom I had been torn for ever, that I wept bitterly:—"Pour forth eyes your floods of tears, and quench the flames which devour my entrails, kindled by anguish and separation from he loved one of my heart; I watched in anguish

through the morning; the day is gone and the evening is past but still the unquenchable fire burns on. Farewell, O world, if thy moon should set; so the presence of the beloved is a Paradise, and her absence the darkness of night."

In the morning we pursued our journey, and found ourselves in a fertile plain, covered with vegetation, and spread with a carpet of refreshing green. On our right was a long valley, running from the sea-shore inland, in which the Belled el Sheikh Mooza was pointed out to us, perched on an eminence. White camels, cows, red and black goats, and countless flocks of sheep, gave life to this smiling scene.

Quitting these green pastures with regret, we crossed a sandy desert-looking tract, almost without vegetation, and, passing Min Tabos Aboora, arrived in about four hours at Kissarie, where ancient Cesarea stood. No dwellings were there seen, as in many other places of ancient renown in the East, mingling their squalid meanness with the remains of bygone grandeur; but all was desolation, and without a living soul, save a few migrating Arabs with their flocks, who had encamped near the ponderous wall of the largest ruin, which seems to have

been once a mighty fortress, from its massive walls, towers, and loopholes.

Without making any considerable stay at Cesarea, we prosecuted our journey for about two hours longer, until we arrived at a village called Sakhra Maktouāh, signifying "the hewn rock," a name given to it from its proximity to the remains of numerous habitations of great antiquity hewn out of the solid rock, and supposed to have been the dwellings of the Canaanites.

The sheikh of the village came forth to meet us, and received us with demonstrations of the most cordial hospitality, offering us, in the Arab fashion, a pipe, and a dish made of flour, butter, and honey. He was from the desert near Bagdad, and we soon found abundance of subjects of mutual interest to discourse upon. The sheikh told me and an inhabitant of Mosul, one of the caravan, who had joined in the conversation, of some interesting ruins to be seen at a short distance from the village inland; my companion proposed that we should go to view these ruins whilst the cooks were engaged in preparing our meal.

Having obtained the sheikh's permission we set off, and soon found ourselves in the midst of a mass

of broken fragments of architectural ornaments. The sheikh having directed our attention to a building which, he said, according to tradition, had formerly been a heathen temple, and had been subsequently converted into a Christian church during the crusades, we made our way towards a mass of ruins, which towered above the surrounding heaps of rubbish, which I immediately concluded to be the structure spoken of by the sheikh. On entering the enclosure we startled a number of birds with beautiful plumage, some with breasts of a brilliant red, and others of a deep blue. These I supposed to be the only inhabitants of this ancient temple, till, to my great astonishment, I saw in one of the courts several young women, engaged in the manufacture of carpets.

We were just on the point of returning, when we were thrown into great alarm at finding a party, consisting of nine or ten most ferocious looking fellows, stopping up the opening by which we had entered, fully armed, and evidently not disposed to allow us a free passage.

Having obtained the permission of the sheikh to visit the temple, we had come unattended and

almost unarmed, relying on the assurances we had received, that no danger was to be apprehended. We had each of us a hanjar and a pipe—implements not very likely to strike terror into the minds of half a score of bandits, armed to the teeth.

On our approaching them the leader of the party demanded our money and our valuables, politely assuring us that if we quietly submitted to be stripped no harm should befall us, and that we should be allowed to depart in peace for our tents, which were at some distance from the village, and which again was a long walk from the ruins; so that it was altogether useless to think of calling for assistance, and the robbers had sworn to make the ruined temple our tomb, if we refused to submit to their demands.

My companion showed a disposition to resist, notwithstanding my vehement protestations, that resistance could not possibly avail against such overwhelming numbers. Seeing that we made no reply, two or three of the foremost advanced towards us, brandishing their daggers, upon which, my companion immediately drew his hanjar, and prepared to defend himself; but he was in a short

time overpowered by numbers. Seeing that matters had come to this pass, I also drew my hanjar; but, like him, was speedily disarmed.

We were now completely at their mercy, and, for my own part, I entirely gave myself up for lost. The robbers, however, contented themselves with despoiling us of all that we had about us of any value, and stripping us to our under garments, (which they were considerate enough to leave us), and made off. They robbed me of twenty rebaieh, a small gold piece worth about five francs, and, what I regretted infinitely more, of my hanjar,—which had a silver handle beautifully ornamented.

The coast being clear, we hobbled back, as well as our bare feet would allow us, to the village, over large loose rolling stones, which lacerated our feet at every step. Our hair too, was well nigh scorched off our heads, by the intense heat of the sun; from which we had no turbans to protect us.

The indignation of the sheikh on learning our disaster knew no bounds. He immediately had his own, and two other horses saddled for me and my companion in misfortune, and, ordering as many of his tribe as were within hearing, to mount with all

speed and follow us, dashed off for the scene of our pillage.

On reaching the temple we found it deserted. Not a soul was to be seen in any of its ruined courts. We now resolved, therefore, to reconnoitre the outside, and, making the circuit of its outer wall, we were not long before we came upon the band, quietly sitting on the ground in a circle, and busily engaged in apportioning their newly acquired booty.

On seeing our party, they rose in confusion and made a show of resistance; but on discovering their chief amongst us, they laid down their arms, and paid him the expected homage.

All our property was immediately restored to us, with the exception of the twenty rebaieh; which I desired the men to keep, and we returned to the camp in company with the sheikh, to whom I offered my warmest thanks for his kind intervention, expressing my regret that I had nothing with me worthy of his acceptance, but promising to send him a suitable present on reaching the residence of my friends in the Lebanon. He declined, however, my proffered present, swearing by his

beard, that he had done no more than his bounden and sacred duty, in seeing righted the friends with whom he had eaten bread and salt.

The women of this tribe are tall, straight, and well formed, having long black hair, which descends to their knees. They, however, disfigure themselves with a large ring, which hangs from the nose, passing through a hole pierced in the cartilage. Their breasts they wear bare; and their dress consists of a blue khamis, confined at the waist by a broad black leather girdle.

On regaining our tents we found our friends in a state of considerable alarm at our long absence. I recounted to them our adventure, and having returned sincere thanks to Providence for our deliverance, supped and retired to rest, overcome with the fatigue of the day.

CHAPTER V.

Mount Carmel—The Convent at its Summit—The Grotto of Elias—Nazareth—The Church of the Annunciation—The Abode of Joseph—Mount Tabor—St. Jean D'Acre—The Emir Beschir's Palace—An Eastern Princess—A Dangerous Adventure—Private Theatricals in the East—Splendour of the Druse Costume—Parting Presents.

Our journey on the following day was delightful. Right before us the venerable Carmel reared its lofty peak; its western side presenting a brilliant white line against the deep tranquil blue of a Syrian sky. Farther inland to our right was seen the massive summit of Mount Thabor, looking like the mighty dome of some stupendous temple reared to the Most High. Not far from the beach was the Khallat el Ateek, a ruined castle. As we approached Mount Carmel, caves and grottos, similar to those we had already seen, presented themselves at every turn; showing that the Canaanites must,

in ancient days, have settled on this spot in considerable numbers.

Passing the well of Terfoon, situated under a village of that name on the hill above, we entered the Wadi el Ajal, a short, rocky passage, and, crossing a sandy track close to the sea, encamped not far from the village Etleery.

The following day we devoted to ascending Mount Carmel. On presenting ourselves at the convent, which is built on the very highest part of the mountain peak, the gate was opened to us by a friar, with a countenance full of serene cheerfulness and peaceful benevolence, who received us with great kindness, and offered us refreshment. I never remember to have beheld a countenance in which contentment, benevolence, courage and resignation were more happily blended. He had been an inmate of the convent one-and-forty years.

First of all we went over the building, which is large and commodious, but was inhabited at that time by no more than three priests. We then sat down to an excellent dinner of fish, birds, and vegetables, cultivated by the friars on the mountain side.

At the conclusion of our meal we went forth to an adjoining fountain, where coffee and pipes were

served. From hence we proceeded to the grotto of Elias, a spacious cavern cut in the rock, a vast chamber of great height, having its open side towards the coast; so that nothing is seen from it but the blue and boundless sea, and the deep and intense azure of the cloudless sky. A dervish is now the tenant of this cavern. Here the inspired prophet taught the holy mysteries of the everlasting God. Here, filled with divine inspiration, he unlocked the book of destiny, and foretold the vengeance of the Almighty. Who shall say how much of the vengeance thus foretold is to be called down in our days by the cold-hearted hypocrisy and self-seeking iniquity of men, who sacrifice their dearest friend to the most trifling measure of selfish ease or interest? The tale is told and the doom of the unrighteous is pronounced, and yet perverse rebellious man wallows in the mire of blasphemy, and the Redeemer has died in vain. The book is sealed. "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they believe if one shall rise again from the dead."

On the following day, we set out for Nazareth; where we arrived after a journey of nine hours, over a barren and stony tract.

We had approached the city within a short distance, but no portion of it was as yet visible. At length, after toiling up the side of a steep hill, and gaining the summit, it broke suddenly upon our view, embosomed in the valley below, just at the foot of the mountain. The sight of its white houses, the Maronite and Greek churches, the Latin convent and the mosque, with its minaret rising in the midst, surrounded by fertile and well cultivated grounds, was most refreshing, after the barren scene presented to our view during our journey from Mount Carmel.

Beholding, at length, the city where our Saviour passed so great a portion of his earthly life, and the name of which I had repeated in daily songs of praise ever since my earliest childhood, I dismounted from my horse, and falling upon my knees, I said the Ave Maria. Then, remounting, I descended towards the city, with a heart full of joy and thanksgiving, while tears of penitence, love, and hope, fell from my eyes and bedewed the mane of my steed.

We remained for the night at the khan; but the thoughts of the sacred spots which I was to visit on the morrow effectually drove sleep from my eyes.

On the morrow we took up our abode at the house of a Maronite family.

On the following day I saw the church of the Annunciation, a large and handsome building; beneath the church is the grotto of the Annuncitiaon, which is arrived at by descending a flight of marble steps, flanked by a gilded balustrade, which leads to a hollow space, from which site, it is said, that the house of the Virgin Mary was taken and transported to Loretto. Beyond this is a second grotto, the very spot on which the angel announced to the Blessed Virgin the fulness of grace and blessing. Near this are seen two small chambers which served as the kitchen and cellar of the Madonna. After quitting the church, we visited the spot where Joseph had his workshop, and in which our Lord is believed to have wrought. It is now a small chapel containing an altar, above which is a picture representing Joseph with his implements of trade around him, and holding the infant Jesus in his hand.

We remained here some days, and went to see the mountain from which the men of Nazareth would have cast the Saviour, and the synagogue

where Jesus went to learn that law which he came into the world to fulfill and purify.

One day we employed in visiting Mount Thabor. After travelling between three and four hours, we reached the little village of Debbora, where the tent of Jahel, the wife of Haber the Cinite, stood, in which Sisara sought refuge, flying discomfited from the victorious hosts of Debbora and Barac, the son of Abinoem, who had made so furious a descent from Mount Thabor on his army, that it was utterly routed, "his nine hundred chariots armed with scythes, and all his army." "And the Lord struck a terror into Sisara, and all his chariots and all his multitude with the edge of the sword, at the sight of Barac, insomuch that Sisara, leaping down from off his chariot, fled away on foot. And Barac pursued after the fleeing chariots and the army unto Haraseth of the Gentiles; and all the multitude of the enemies was utterly destroyed."

"He asked her water and she gave him milk; and offered him butter in a dish fit for princes. She put her left hand to the nail and her right hand to the workman's hammer; and she struck Sisara: seeking in his head a place for the wound, and strongly piercing through his temples. At her

feet he fell, he fainted, and he died; he rolled before her feet, and he lay lifeless and wretched. His mother looked out at a window and howled, and she spoke from the dining-room:—

"'Why is his chariot so long in coming back? Why are the feet of his horses so slow?'

"One that was wiser than the rest of his wives returned this answer to her mother-in-law; 'Perhaps he is now dividing the spoils, and the fairest of the women is chosen out for him. Garments of divers colours are given to Sisara for his prey, and furniture of different kinds is heaped together to adorn the neck.'" "So let all thy enemies perish, O Lord: but let them that love Thee shine, as the sun shineth in his rising!"

From Debbora, we reached, in less than an hour, the wide level space which forms the summit of Mount Thabor, and enjoyed the splendid view which it affords, embracing, on the south, the dewy Hermon, and the brook Cison; on the south-east, the plain of Gallilee, and the mountains of Gelboe, where Saul fell upon his sword; on the north-east, the lake of Genesareth, and the hill down which the swine, into which the Saviour had permitted the evil spirit to enter, rushed into its waters; and

disclosing, on the west, at intervals, through gaps in the chain of mountains which stretch along in that direction, the blue waters of the Mediterranean. On one side of the summit are the remains of buildings, and ruined walls of enclosures, which must have been of considerable strength, and have an air of great antiquity. A small Christian church stands on the top of Mount Thabor.

Descending from the mountain's top, we continued our journey south-east, towards the Jordan, which we crossed by a bridge called Jisr Yaconb, and visited some baths, where there are four fountains, supposed to possess healing qualities, and resorted to by great numbers from Syria, Judea, and the Haourān. The sheikh of the village close by the baths, came forth to meet us, and invoking blessings on our heads, supplied us with sherbet, coffee, and pipes, and showed us every conceivable mark of Arab hospitality.

Whilst at Nazareth, we made an excursion to Tabarieh, and saw the spot where the house of St. Peter stood, hard by the sea of Galilee, or lake of Genesareth. Here also we were shown the tomb of Ibn Lakman, the author of The Arabian

Nights. We also made an excursion to the place where the marriage feast was held at which Christ miraculously changed the water into wine, and were shown the very pitchers of stone in which the water was contained.

On returning to St. Jean D'Acre, I waited, with my letters of introduction, on the Pasha's Haznadar, who offered me every assistance in his power, and proposed to procure me an introduction into the Pasha's harem; which I was compelled respectfully to decline, as I did not intend to remain in Acre more than one day, and, in order to pay such a visit, some preparations would have been necessary, which must have retarded my departure some days.

Accordingly, after a delay of a day at Acre, I joined a party of traders, who were going to Deir Elkamar, and, accompanied by the bishop, set out for Beteddin, the residence of the Emir Beschir.

On approaching the Emir's palace, I was struck with its princely aspect; to which its vast terraces, supported on arcades, rising one above another, like the branches of a palm-tree, greatly contribute.

As we paused to contemplate the lovely scene which presented itself to our view, a party of horse-

men rode up, and their leader informed us that he had been sent from the palace to escort us thither. He then rode apparently in an opposite direction, and passing round the base of the mountain, on which the Emir's palace is perched, led the way up to the secret gate. We followed, and were admitted by the guard. A venerable old Mameluke at the gate conducted me through a court, and knocked at a door, which was opened, and I was conducted to a room where I was received by two white female slaves, by whom I was led through a magnificent court, surrounded by cages of singing birds, and having in the centre of its polished marble pavement, a beautiful marble fountain, of elegant design, which threw out vast streams of water clear as crystal, from the mouths of two huge lions. To the iwān at the end of this court was a large balcony, overlooking the road by which we had approached the palace, far down in the valley below. The balcony was flanked by a balustrade, and filled with odoriferous flowers. The floor of the iwān was covered with a beautiful Persian carpet, on the centre of which was a musnud, or mattrass about six inches in thickness, covered with scarlet silk,

and embroidered. The ceiling was enriched with elaborately carved ornaments, of a lozenge shape, painted in many colours, and gilded, and the walls beautifully painted with flowers in arabesque patterns; the work, I believe, of artists from Damascus.

In the left wall of the iwān, was a door leading into a vast saloon, splendidly decorated with handsome silk hangings, and a diwan covered with yellow silk. On the right was an elegant little chamber, or boudoir, from the window of which beautiful views over the magnificent scenery of the Lebanon, with its endless mountains and valleys, presented themselves, in every conceivable variety of effective light and shade. Into this room I was shown, where I was soon attended by numerous white slaves, who brought me water to wash with, and napkins of the finest material with edges of gold embroidery.

Having washed, the same assiduous attendants brought incense in a silver censer, and rose-water in a silver vessel, with a contrivance similar to that employed in churches for sprinkling holy water over the congregation. Two slaves held a large napkin

over my head, stretched tight to prevent the fumes of the incense from dissipating too suddenly; a third knelt on one knee in front of me, swinging the censer to and fro, whilst a fourth sprinkled me all over with rose-water, from the vessel just described.

This being over, I was supplied with coffee and a nerghila, in the bowl of which was put some aloe-wood, which filled the whole chamber with a grateful odour. I was then left alone for two hours, from eleven in the forenoon till one, and passed two very pleasant hours. The refreshing effect of the ablution which I had just undergone, after the heat and fatigue, the jolting and the tumbling of the rugged paths over which I had recently passed —the assiduous and kind attention of the attendants, succeeding the comparative hardships and privations inseparable from travel—the dying fragrance of the incense, succeeded by the fresher odours of sweet-smelling flowers, renewed as each succeeding zephyr from the blue Mediterranean came wafted gently into the well shaded chamber, after the scorching glare of the sun from which I had just escaped— the peaceful stillness, only broken in upon by the

song of birds, and the murmur of the purling fountain, after the clatter of horses hoofs over the loose stones, and the shouts of the katerchia—the sense of serenity, and the knowledge that I was at length under the protection of a Prince, whose vigorous arm upheld the dignity of Christianity in the East, and bid its followers confess their God without fear, made the hours seem but as minutes, and I fervently returned thanks to God for his mercy, in vouchsafing to bring, at length, my shattered bark into so blessed a haven.

After the lapse of about an hour, I took a stroll round the marble court, which was deliciously cool and shady; and, after spending a short time on the terrace, returned to the boudoir, where I found the Emir Beschir, together with his Amira, who had come to seek me.

I could not help being struck with a feeling of veneration, almost amounting to awe, on approaching the august presence of the venerable Emir, whose appearance completely realised the ideal conception which I had formed in my mind of the patriarch Abraham.

With a countenance lighted up with kindness and

tender sympathy, the Emir approached me, and, after the usual compliments, such as "Ahalan w' sahalan,"—"You are doubly welcome." "Halat elbaraka fikum,"—"A benediction descends with your presence." "Al beit beitaki w' lumr umraki,"—"This house is yours, and your commands law," we all three sat down, and the Prince, after condoling with me on the misfortunes which had befallen me and my family, made many kind inquiries respecting my future views and prospects.

Thanking him warmly for the sympathy which he had so graciously bestowed on an unfortunate being like myself, I told him that it had long been my wish to retire from the world and shut myself up in some convent, where I might end my days in peace; but that, hitherto, it had pleased God to frustrate the ardent desires of my soul. Now, however, since Providence had thought fit to place me at length under the protection of a Prince who was, as it were, in the East the ark of faith floating on the wide and stormy waters, and amid the dark desolation of fanatical infidelity, to which the faithful must cling if they would be saved, the end of my sorrows—the haven of my hope—seemed in view, and I trusted that, under his fostering pro-

tection, I might hope to end my days in peace, in some convent of the Lebanon.

The Emir dissuaded me from pursuing this course, and generously offered me an asylum in his palace, as companion to the Amira, if I would abandon my determination, assuring me that I should find, under his roof, ample scope for the cultivation and exercise of the Christian virtues, as ample, perhaps, as in any cloister. The frankness and evident sincerity of the Prince, joined with his venerable appearance, convinced me that his words were the words of truth. Without hesitation, therefore, I gratefully accepted his offer.

I was soon installed in my new office as kekhea, or first lady of honour, to the Amira, and had apartments provided for me in the harem, close to those appropriated to the use of the Princess. These were situated in a part of the palace at a distance from the state rooms, in which the Emir Beschir received his court, and transacted the business of his government, and were on the stage immediately above the iwān.

The tharma, around which the apartments of the Amira were situated, was a vast hall of goodly proportions, having, on the side opposite to that which

opened towards the court, large folding doors (closed only in winter) leading on to a wide terrace, in which the Emir and Amira often spent some hours in the afternoon. On the left, a door led into the apartments of the Princess, and on the right another door led to a Christian chapel, in which the Prince and Princess regularly and scrupulously performed their devotions every day. The key of this chapel was entrusted to my care shortly after I had taken up my abode at Beteddin, and I was instructed to keep it always concealed, in case of visits to the Amira from Druse and Turkish ladies.

Not a week passed without visits from some of these, who, sometimes to the number of a dozen, stayed for more than a week in the Amira's harem. Many of them, as I escorted them through the apartments, with a curiosity, perhaps not unnatural in a woman, would fain know what the apartment on the right of the tharma contained; and I was sometimes not a little puzzled by their pertinacious inquiries. I generally excused myself from showing this part of the palace, by saying that it contained arms and treasure belonging to the Emir, which was the truth.

When I had been a short time domiciled at Beteddin, I was intrusted with the keys of the apartments in which were stored all the Emir's treasure; from which I, on many occasions, sent him supplies when engaged on any expedition.

Whilst we were honoured by the presence of these visitors, some of whom were members of the Shehab family, and others belonging to the chiefs of the Druses, Maronites, Motowlis, Greeks, and powerful Turks, from the neighbourhood of Acre, Beyroot, and Damascus, our time passed in strolling in the garden, eating, drinking, and smoking alternately, two days in the week being devoted to the hammam or bath.

I was greatly astonished to see that the Druse ladies never partook of the fare sent from the Emir's kitchen, on the occasions when we all dined in company; but were served by their own attendants, who always brought into the dining-room baskets filled with all kinds of provisions, such as roast fowls, makhshi, which is a kind of a gourd hollowed and filled with a stuffing made of some kind of meat, mingled with sweet herbs, rice, spices, saffron, &c. I offered to help some of them, on more than one

occasion, to one of the choicest dishes on the table, but always met with a refusal.

Some time after I had formed an intimacy with one of these ladies, I took the liberty to ask her the reason of this extraordinary proceeding. She told me that their religion forbade them to taste food prepared by strange hands. This appeared surprising to me; because I had seen the very individual whom I was addressing, while we were rambling in the mountains, eat at the house of a Christian Aga, where we stopped to rest; and on recalling this circumstance to her recollection, she confessed, (enjoining me strictly to secresy) that the Emir Beschir was pretty universally regarded by her people as an usurper, and that they would not consent to receive at his hands that which they believed he had no right to dispense.

I was much shocked on learning that so unjust and unfounded an opinion should have taken root in the minds of any of the Emir's subjects, and did all I could to remove such absurd scruples from the breast of my companion. "Shall not," I said, "the lord of the mountain take the miri? How

else should he reward the just, relieve the poor, and punish the unjust and violent man? Are not all his acts for the happiness and welfare of those put under him? For eight centuries the Shehab has held sway in the Lebanon, ruling with justice and mercy; how, then, shall the Druse call him an usurper? Remove him from his throne, and how shall the naked be clad, for whom the merchants of Deir el Kamar provide clothing at the Emir's private expense? How shall the hungry be fed, for whom the Emir's ovens, whose fires cease not, send forth that which is needful for life every day; for whom the Emir's butchers kill the fat sheep; to whom rice without stint is given daily, so that none is sent empty away? These at least, the naked and the hungry, the widow and the fatherless, whom his generosity alone preserves from ruin, will bitterly rue the day which hurls him from power."

Besides these arguments, I called upon her to bear in mind how many slaves he had purchased at considerable sums, for the sole purpose of manumitting, and sending them home to their parents and friends; facts notorious to all the

dwellers in the Lebanon. "All this is true," she said; "the Emir is just and merciful. May God prolong his life, and grant him many years to reign over us; but who am I that I should despise the decrees of the Akhals?" My reasoning was triumphant, but my friend continued to feed exclusively on Druse poultry.

After dinner, we usually took pipes and coffee in the tharma. We were amused by some negresses in the Amira's service, who went through several dances, some of them so grotesque and droll, as to draw a smile from the company, (hearty laughter being a heinous offence against good breeding among the ladies of the East); whilst their less gifted sable companions sprinkled the marble pavement of the tharma with water to cool the air.

By way of varying the entertainments, I once concerted a trick with the princess which had well nigh been attended with serious consequences to myself. One day, when the ladies were enjoying their nerghilahs after dinner, I left the room, and arraying myself in one of the Emir's most splendid dresses, with a sadrieh, or jacket, of golden tissue,

rose-coloured sherwals, a turban of the finest muslin ornamented by a thousand flowers worked in different colours, with a Persian shawl of great price, and a hanjar magnificently studded with jewels, burst suddenly into the room, with as much of the male swagger in my gait as I could assume.

On seeing a man, as they supposed, thus audaciously thrusting himself into their presence, the ladies, Druse, Turks and all, arose at once in the greatest consternation, and set up a piercing shriek, calling loudly for assistance, to the great enjoyment of the Amira, who was in the secret.

Without heeding the sensation which my presence occasioned, I walked coolly up to the circle of ladies, and seating myself by the side of a lady of the Shehab family, a near relation of the Emir, proceeded to embrace her. This brought matters to a crisis. The lady cried aloud, and rushed, her face blushing like crimson, to the door, which at that moment was opened by a negress who, with two or three of her fellow slaves, had come to see the cause of the disturbance, and all of whom, on catching a glimpse of me, forthwith

joined in the chorus, and sped away with the utmost precipitation.

While I was congratulating myself on the success of my freak, and revelling in the affright which my presence had caused to the Amira's guests, who, in the greatest confusion had hastily covered their countenances with their veils, and were standing trembling, with their faces turned to the wall, the guardian of the harem, a venerable old man with a white beard, but strong as a lion, and more than six feet high, to whom the negresses had communicated what was passing, rushed into the room with a drawn sword in his hand, and advancing up to me, seized me by the collar of my sadrieh, exclaiming, "Ya kalb al rajal,"—"Thou dog of men, what business hast thou in the sacred precincts of the serail?"

The Princess was so convulsed with laughter at this unexpected turn which our trick had taken, that she was unable to utter a word. The guardian grasped my collar with so iron a hand, that I was almost strangled, and could not articulate a syllable. At length, seeing that matters were likely to become serious, as the guardian

began to flourish his naked sword with a menacing air, the Amira found her tongue, explained matters, and bade him retire. The ladies having recovered from the fright laughed heartily at the trick. For my own part, I saw but little to laugh at, but finding myself free from the unmerciful grasp of the guardian, I inwardly returned thanks for my escape, and resolved in my own mind, to play no more tricks in male attire.

We sometimes amused ourselves in the evening by getting up plays; and on these occasions I always took an active part. One of these, which I myself concocted, was founded on the visit of the Queen of Saba to Solomon. In this I myself played the part of Solomon, and arrayed myself in one of the Emir Beschir's most magnificent dresses of ceremony; which the Princess obtained expressly for the occasion. In order to tranquillize my feelings, word was sent to the guardian, not to rush in and lay violent hands on any of us, whatever sounds or cries he might hear from the negresses. The Princess herself undertook the character of the Queen, whose ardent thirst for knowledge brought her from so great a

distance to drink the waters of wisdom from its acknowledged fountain head; and a most fascinating Queen she made. She was arrayed in one of her most splendid costumes, and covered with jewels shining like a sun. Had her prototype been half so charming, the wise king would probably have forgotten his wisdom while beholding her lovely face.

We selected for our theatre one of the largest saloons in the harem. I sat on a throne, raised above the floor by six steps, covered with rich stuffs, and the Amira approached my august presence, followed by a long train of beautiful attendants sumptuously attired, and bearing presents, the price of her Majesty's schooling. A more splendid *coup d'œil* I have seldom seen than the one we presented on this occasion. The decorations of the saloon, the gorgeous dresses of the Amira and her attendants, and the picturesque costume of the Druse ladies with their lofty tentours, (a cone about two feet high, of gold or silver, and three or four inches in diameter at its base, which the female Druses wear on their heads,) of gold studded with precious stones; these, together with

the rest of the Princess's guests sat, smoking their finely ornamented nerghilahs at the other end of the apartment, and formed the audience, constituting a picture which, for magnificence of display, it would be difficult to surpass.

Among the presents were a dove and a monkey, the latter of which obtained more applause than any other actor in the scene. Upon being brought to the foot of the throne, he fell on his knees and kissed the ground; and then, rising on his feet, placed his hand, first on his mouth, then on his forehead, and then on his heart, like a good Eastern as he was. This spontaneous and scrupulous observance of etiquette drew shouts of applause from our audience; which, however, produced no sort of effect on the actor, who maintained a dignified gravity throughout.

With such amusements as these, to the enjoyment of which all assembled brought a hearty good will and the best of humour, varied occasionally by a game at chess or fanagin, described in an early part of these memoirs, (a game in which a ring is hidden under one of ten cups, the party, on whom the task of discovering it is imposed by

the company, being blindfolded during the operation) we contrived to pass our evenings very pleasantly.

Besides these we had our strolls about the gardens, and our hammam (bath); which we women of the East enjoy to the full as much, I will venture to say—for I have seen both, and therefore am not speaking in ignorance—as any lady of fashion in Europe with her balls, routs, and *fêtes champetres.*

Our guests, in conformity with Eastern usage, on quitting the palace, always received presents according to their rank and station. I have seen bouquets of diamonds and rings of great value distributed to ladies of distinction, while their inferiors received some fifteen draā of gold tissue to make a dress, and the attendants a like quantity of an inferior material; so that these visits to Beteddin entailed something more than mere inexpensive civility on the part of the Prince and Princess. It will be readily imagined, that our adieus were of a warm and glowing character.

The Emir Beschir kept a number of musicians in his palace, who beguiled his hours of leisure, and

served to soothe his mind when over excited by the cares and fatigue of government, by songs and sounds of harp and flute. On grand feasts these minstrels stood behind the Prince's throne, singing sometimes the praises and celebrating the virtues of the Emir himself, at others the glories and virtues of those of his visitors to whom he was desirous of doing honour.

CHAPTER VI.

Rival Sects of Mahometans—Lady Hester Stanhope—A Druse Lady—The Emir Beschir—His Deeds and Character—His Zenana—The Amira—Her Piety and Conjugal Devotion—Anecdote—Runaway Slaves—A Story of Chaldea—Georgian Slaves.

Besides the Druse chiefs and their families who frequented Beteddin, we were often visited by the chiefs of the Motowlies and Anzaries, who now and then brought their wives to pay their respects to the Amira. The Motowlies are Mahometans of the Ali or Shiah sect, and cordially detest their rivals of the Omar or Suni sect. They scrupulously avoid eating with any but those of their own creed, and entertain a dread of being touched in their persons or garments by unbelievers. They formerly held sway in the Anti-Libanus about Baalbec, where they are still found in considerable

numbers. They likewise abound in the district lying between Soor and Saida, in the neighbourhood of Lady Hester's palace of Dijion, a magnificent old deserted monastery, which Abdallah Pasha had granted her ladyship, and which she had repaired and fitted up with great taste, surrounding it with magnificent gardens in the Turkish fashion. Notwithstanding their horror of eating with infidels, they are exceedingly hospitable to strangers of all classes, although they invariably destroy every utensil out of which such guests may have eaten or drunk. The Emir Beschir had numbers of this people about him, employed in various services, military and civil, who seemed to have overcome the habitual scruples of their sect, freely eating and drinking with their companions of different creeds. The Motowlies are looked upon with contempt by Maronites, Druses, and the other inhabitants of the mountain.

Of the tenets of the Anzaries but little is known, for, like the Druses, they studiously conceal the nature of their rites and observances from the profane. There is, however, no doubt that they are idolaters like the Druses. They worship the dog,

and venerate the Nahr el Kelb (Dog river) as a sacred stream. Their ancestors have, for many centuries, upheld this form of worship.

The Druse lady, with whom I had the argument before related, gave me a pressing invitation to pay her a visit; which I declined, alleging my duties in the palace as an excuse. To show her esteem, however, she sent me shortly after two large baskets of fruit by a servant, who, on the road, amused himself by tasting the delicacies intended for me, to such a degree, that he reached Beteddin with empty baskets, and in so alarming a condition, that he could scarcely crawl, and I was obliged to place him under the care of the Emir's hakeem for ten days, before he was sufficiently recovered to return home.

Had it occurred to me that I should, in the course of my life, have been led to publish these Memoirs, I might have noted down some interesting particulars respecting this singular people; especially the females, during my stay at Beteddin, where I associated constantly with the Druses. But who can foresee the fate for which he is reserved? The Arab proverb justly says, "Hazi aldunia dou-

doulaboun yadour. La farahan yadoum w' la hamoum. Taraf miladak, la haiatāk w' la mimatak." —"This world is a wheel which revolves incessantly; pleasure abideth not, neither doth grief endure. Of thy birth thou hast knowledge, but canst not foretel in what manner thou shalt live or where thou shalt die."

The Emir Beschir, it is well known, is descended from Mahomet. The government of the Lebanon has resided in his family for more than seven centuries, and for a century and a half, the head of the family has secretly conformed to the rites of the Christian church; although supposed by a great number of the dwellers on the mountain, still to adhere to the doctrines of Islam; an impression, which the Emir's outward conformity with some of the customs of the Turkish followers of the Prophet, has, no doubt, tended, in no small degree, to strengthen.

The present Emir, when I had the good fortune to be his guest, had been in power forty years, and by the firmness and liberality of his policy, had continued, during that long period, to consolidate the jarring and heterogeneous elements committed

to his sway into something like an united body; insomuch that peace reigned in the mountain, and the Moslem thirsted not for the blood of his Christian fellow subject. In short, Maronite, Motowli, Mahometan, and Druse, looked upon each other as brethren.

I have said that the Emir was believed by many to conform strictly to the faith of Mahomet; a belief strengthened by his outward adherence to Turkish social habits. His palace contained a spacious harem, which was supposed by many to resemble, in all respects, similar establishments in the palaces of other powerful governors, entrusted by the Porte with vice-regal functions. Nothing can be farther from the truth. It was my good fortune to be an inmate in this part of the Emir's palace for several years, and I solemnly assert, that, far from being the abode of selfish sensuality, the zenana of the Prince of the Lebanon might justly have been called a school of Christian virtue.

During the early part of his reign, after having pardoned repeated acts of treason and insubordination on the part of two of his nephews, he had, to save himself from destruction, and his people

from anarchy and desolation, been compelled to put them to death, as they had been deeply implicated in a conspiracy to effect his downfal.

This act of self-preservation, which, amongst the powerful in any country, is unhappily of such common occurrence that it almost fails to arrest a great attention for a moment, produced so terrible an effect on the mind of the Emir, that he resolved to spend the rest of his days in an earnest endeavour to wipe out the iniquity by deeds of expiation and grace; thereby humbly treading in the footsteps of the royal Psalmist. Among other acts of benevolence, he maintained two ovens daily at work, for the sole purpose of feeding the poor and hungry wanderer, from whatever country, or corner of the earth, who, but for his bounty, must have fallen into misery. Besides this, he constantly sent emissaries out into the valleys about his palace, to discover those who were fit objects of his benevolence.

His harem was filled with young slaves, both Georgians and Circassians; some of them of great beauty, whom he had purchased at a large price, for the sole purpose of setting them free. Such of them as sighed for kindred and home, were furnished

with the means of returning to their native country; while those who preferred to remain under the Emir's paternal care, often found good husbands, or, if they preferred leading a single life, a kind patroness in the Princess. Many who chose the last-mentioned mode of life, were sent into some of the numerous convents with which the Lebanon abounds. Many Mamelukes, also, whom the Emir had purchased, were in like manner manumitted, and suffered to return to their relations and friends. Not a few of these, however, preferred entering the Emir's service, ready to shed the last drop of their blood in their benefactor's defence.

The wife of the Emir Beschir, whom I had the honour to serve, was the Emir's second wife. The Emir had purchased her at a great price, at Constantinople, together with many others, for the purpose of choosing a worthy partner. Shortly after the death of his first wife, El Sitte Shams, with whom the Prince had lived for forty years, and to whom he had always shown an unvarying and tender love, although, for a long time before her death, she had been a martyr to dropsy, he selected his present Sultana from

the rest, no less captivated by her beauty, than charmed by her amiable disposition and purity of heart. Before he united himself to her, she embraced Christianity, and was baptized. This was her own act; for the Emir would have scorned to employ either the terrors of his power or the allurements of his rank, to procure a hypocritical adherence to a faith, the spirit and letter of which forbid a resort to such unworthy means. I have often heard the Amira return thanks to Providence for having vouchsafed to guide her erring steps to the temple of the true God.

The Amira had been educated after the usual Eastern manner. She possessed an uncommon share of good sense, which made her defective education scarcely perceptible. She could neither read nor write; so that the burden of her correspondence fell entirely on me. She spoke both the Circassian and Turkish languages, but could not converse in Arabic. Then she was of so amiable a temper, and had so warm and affectionate a heart, that I felt I could have died to serve her.

Although the disparity between their ages was so great, the Princess being then not more than

eighteen years old, while the Emir had seen considerably more than three score summers, nothing could exceed the genuine fervour of the love she bore her lord.

I remember once when the Emir Beschir was absent, engaged at the head of his troops, quelling an insurrection which had broken out in the Haourān, the Princess suffered so grievously in spirit from fear respecting his safety, that she passed many nights without sleep, and for whole days could not be prevailed on to take food.

This was in the winter season; and one night, as I laid in bed, unable to sleep, I heard the Amira's door open, and then the sound of passing footsteps from her room across the tharma towards the terrace. I rose and dressed myself. It was bitterly cold; the snow lay deep on the ground and covered the terrace,—from which a chilly blast came rushing through the tharma, around which I groped my way, aided by the light which the snow afforded, in order to discover in what direction the Princess had gone. On the right of the tharma, as I have said before, was the church, in which service was daily performed in the presence of the Prince and

Princess, and such of their court as belonged to the Christian communion; to the Mussulman portion of his retinue, its situation was unknown. It was a small oblong building, capable of containing about forty persons, richly adorned with variegated marble, and embellished with painting and gilding, besides some splendid candelabra of silver gilt, Persian carpets of the most exquisite manufacture, and some few pictures.

On reaching the church door, I heard stifled sobs, and on entering, beheld the Amira bathed in tears, kneeling, and in earnest prayer. I knelt by her side, and, when her first transport was over, endeavoured to prevail upon her to return to her chamber, lest she should suffer from the bleak night air. She, however, obstinately refused, and renewed her earnest prayer to the throne of grace for the safety of her beloved lord.

Seeing that she was determined not to retire to rest, I resolved to share her vigils, and endeavour to mitigate her sorrow; beseeching her to reflect that the Emir had been repeatedly engaged in far more desperate enterprises; reminding her of the grief which her conduct would cause him in the event of

its coming to his knowledge; and, in fine, exhorting her to have patience, and put her trust in God.

At length I prevailed upon the Princess to return to her room, where we passed the rest of the night in reading and conversing; occasionally relieving the moments by the soft sounds of a beautiful musical box, belonging to the Princess.

To this church both the Emir and Amira were often in the habit of resorting for the purpose of private prayer. The Emir always went thither as soon as he was dressed. On feast days, a priest used to come to celebrate mass. On other days, I recited private prayers myself, in Arabic.

Amongst the negresses in the harem many had been converted to Christianity. There were, however, two who remained obstinate and deaf to the voice of reason. Not content with refusing to be converted, and dead to every sentiment of gratitude for the forbearance of the Emir, who scorned to make a difference on religious matters a ground of dismissal, these women cherished feelings of rancour and revenge towards him and his whole house, because he had opened the road of salvation to their companions.

One day, as I was walking in the garden adjoining the part of the palace in which these two women were employed, I heard them singing some of the songs of their country, which are of a quaint and singular character. As I stood listening with more than usual attention, (for it was their invariable practice to sing whilst at work,) I heard one of them distinctly communicate to the other, still keeping to the melody, a scheme for denouncing the Emir to the Mufti, for his violation of the sacred rites of Islam, by the introduction of a priest, whom the singer had seen brought privately into the zenana on the last saint's day. I moreover heard them concoct a plan for making their escape over the palace walls, by means of a ladder; the position of which, and the means by which they proposed to possess themselves of it, were all clearly laid down, and eagerly noted by me.

Without troubling the Prince with so absurd a matter, I lost no time in removing the ladder from its place; without which, I well knew escape to be impossible; for the walls were smooth, and as slippery as glass. The plot was apparently nipped in the bud, and the sable conspirators went about their

daily work as usual. About a month afterwards, I told the circumstance to the Emir one evening by way of amusement. The Prince laughed heartily at it, and I was congratulating myself on the success of my precautionary measures, when intelligence was brought that Halima and Saida had made their escape, by means of large nails which they had driven into the walls at intervals, and had got to the top of the wall by means of a cord. Their excursion was, however, doomed to be short. They were recognised and arrested at a village a short distance from Beteddin, by a sheikh in the service of the Emir; who immediately sent a letter to the palace, describing the persons captured, and requesting instructions how to proceed. I read the letter to the Prince; who told me to write word to the sheikh to send them on to Damascus, as a present to a Christian in that city.

It was the Emir's custom to visit the harem shortly after el assr, when he usually went with the Amira, to enjoy his afternoon pipe on the terrace. On these occasions, we often discoursed together for a length of time, chiefly concerning matters of

religion. One of these occasions in particular comes to my mind.

The Prince was sitting, as usual, on the spacious terrace, communicating with the Princess's apartments, which commanded as lovely a view as the imagination can conceive. The terrace itself was surrounded by luxuriant vines, and ornamented with a capacious aviary, filled with birds of every plumage and every note, from the gently cooing dove to the chattering parrot. On the right and on the left arose, in long succession, the varied ridges of the innumerable spurs thrown out by the parent Lebanon, and, in front, the eye wandered through many a steep and tortuous ravine towards the coast. Behind the terrace were the towering summits of the hoary Lebanon, standing in bright relief against the clear and cloudless sky.

When on the terrace, or in the garden, the Emir Beschir sat on a handsome chair, carved and gilt, of English manufacture, the gift of Lady Hester Stanhope. His dress well became his princely rank and lofty rule. His turban, twisted in many folds, was of the finest muslin, covered with a thousand flowers,

embroidered in gold thread. His sadrīeh, or jacket, was of gold tissue; his sherwals of the finest scarlet cloth, secured at the top by a band of green silk, embroidered with gold. Around his middle was thrown a Persian shawl, of rare value. In his girdle his hanjar reposed in a sheath of pure gold, covered with cunning devices; and in the nob, at the end of its handle, glowed a diamond of prodigious size, the price of kingdoms.

He was of commanding stature, and, though far advanced in years, being, at the time I am speaking of, nigh upon his seventieth year, he had not lost an inch of his height, which was above six feet. Add to this a pair of full dark eyes, lively and penetrating, announcing undaunted courage, yet capable of assuming an expression of the most engaging sweetness; a full flowing beard, of silvery whiteness, descending to his girdle; a full, deep, sonorous voice, powerful, yet sweet, fitted alike to make his rallying cry heard amid the din of battle, and to win the heart to friendship and affection by its soft endearing tones,—and my reader has a picture, as far as my feeble pencil can draw it, of the Emir Beschir; a man eminently fitted to rule

the rude and simple, yet brave, population of the Lebanon, composed of so many different castes, each varying from the other in habits and religion, yet all bowing cheerfully to his mild and paternal, yet firm and energetic, sway; a sway which never failed to curb the lawless and turbulent, while it conciliated the peaceful and industrious; and under which the husbandman could rely with certainty on reaping the fruits of his toil, and the lawless bandit on speedy and certain punishment for his depredations and violence.

His kingdom, alas! has passed away. His sceptre is held by the foe, and the true believer seeks the bye-ways, in fear and trembling; the widow and the orphan weep; the bandit robs and kills with impunity; the poor wayfarer knows not where to seek food and shelter; the traveller fears to wander in the hills and vallies of the once peaceful Lebanon; bloodshed reddens the land, and the sower sows not, for he knows not who shall reap!

On becoming conscious of my presence, the Emir commanded two out of several beautiful Georgian slaves waiting around, to bring me coffee

and a pipe. Having executed the command, the jairiahs retired, leaving me alone with the Prince and Princess. For a long time we sat in silence, feasting our eyes on the charming scene around us. It is the custom in the East, in the intervals of conversation to continue smoking, and, from time to time, by a gentle inclination of the body to acknowledge the presence of those in company. At length, the Emir, addressing himself to me, began to expatiate on the abounding mercy and compassion of the Almighty, instancing, in particular, the history of David, whose iniquity, though of a grave character, the Lord had forgiven, because the king turned from his iniquity, and resolved, in deep contrition and humility, to walk in the ways of righteousness, and sin no more.

The Emir was evidently led into this train of thought by the pangs of remorse which arose within his bosom, from the memory of the unfortunate catastrophe I have already described. He had, however, after the fatal act, made all the reparation in his power, by kindness and attention to the wives and families of the men whose crimes had brought them to an untimely fate.

After some further conversation of this nature,

the Emir besought me to recount to him some tale, to wile away the time. Accordingly, without further preface, I narrated to him the following story, which I had often heard my grandmother tell when I was a child, in Chaldea:—

"There was once a pious hermit, who lived alone, passing his days in fasting and praying, and diligently seeking the ways of truth. As he sat one day at the door of his hermitage, weeping for the iniquity which filled the distant city, and turned the hearts of the dwellers therein into the stone of ungodliness and carnal desire, he was accosted by an angel, who thus addressed him:—'Wherefore, O hermit, is thy soul oppressed with grief, and why are the waters of thy soul poured out in wailing?'

"To which the holy man replied—'My bowels are torn because of the frightful doom which awaits the dwellers in yonder city, who live in the darkness of sin, as though there were no God in heaven.'

"'Wouldst thou,' said the spirit, 'that I should show thee the most sinful and the most virtuous man that dwell within its walls?'

"'I pray thee, do this,' replied the hermit, 'that I may strive to make the first even as the last.'

"'Thou shalt have thy wish,' said the angel.

'Go, therefore, arise to-morrow early, before break of day, and seat thyself hard by the city gate. A little after sunrise the gate shall be opened, and a man shall come out, who is a sinner above all sinners throughout the city. Yet leave not thou the city gate, but tarry there until the sun shall go down, and the last man whom thou shalt see enter the gate, he is the most righteous man within the city!'

"And the hermit did as he was commanded, and watched at the city gate; and when the gate was opened a man came forth, driving a mule laden with skins, which he was taking to the stream to cleanse, and having with him a child; and he was the most sinful man in the whole city.

"But the hermit tarried hard by the city gate till eventide; the sun was setting, and he sat in the shadow of the city wall. Now, as the porter was about to close the gate, he saw the same man with his mule laden with skins, which he had cleansed in the brook, enter the city, and the child followed him; and after him no man went into the city that night.

"'What do I see!' exclaimed the hermit, 'is

not this the man whom I beheld but this morning at sunrise carrying his skins to the water to cleanse, and whose sins were greater than those of the other inhabitants that dwell in the city? Shall the same man be at once the most sinful and the most virtuous of his fellows, or can it be that the angel has deceived me? No, I will not believe that angels can lie, like the back-sliding sons of men; but I will inquire further into this matter.'

"Thus resolved, the hermit diligently sought the cleaner of skins, that he might unloose the knot of this riddle; and when he had found him, and questioned him concerning these things, the man said—'The words of the angel, O hermit, are the words of truth. The sun which rose on the morning when thou sawest me come forth out of the city gate, did not shine on a greater sinner than myself; for I had lived all the years of my life in rioting and wickedness, forgetting that a God ruled above. But as I washed my skins in the brook, which is beyond the city, the child, who was with me, began to ask me who made the trees whose shadow shielded us from the sun's scorching rays. Allah, Allah, I replied, as if it were the note of a tabor or pipe—

sound without thought,—for such things had I been taught while yet a child. He then asked me who had formed the clear stream, in which we purified the skins; the grass, on which our mule was feeding, and the beauteous flowers by which it was adorned; the clear blue sky, and the glorious sun above us; and still I repeated the same answer—Allah, Allah. How great is Allah, cried the child, his goodness is without bounds. Tell me where I shall find him, that I may pour forth the thanks of my soul.'

"'At these words my heart seemed rent in twain, a cold sweat stood on my brow, and my knees smote together. It seemed as though a new light had suddenly broken in upon my soul, a film had suddenly fallen from my eyes, and disclosed to me the Almighty, clothed in all his terrible majesty. The memory of my past iniquities then seemed to come between me and the glorious light above, in the form of a hideous fiend of frightful aspect. As I gazed on the appalling figure it expanded, visibly filling all space, and spreading out two enormous wings between me and the light above, shutting from my view the glories of the Creator. From his wings descended the blackness of death, and an

icy wind, howling in the darkness, froze the blood within my veins. I fell on my face, and, for the first time since my childhood, prayed to God. As I lay on my face I heard, on the wings of the blast, a voice, which cried—repent, repent!—I will, I will, I cried; and if it please the Almighty to grant me yet a little time, I will spend the rest of my days in righteousness and thanksgiving.

"'Wherefore,' said the washer of skins, 'thou seest, a marvellous change was wrought in me by the words of a child, and I am henceforth resolved to lead a virtuous life, praising the Lord, and serving him all my days.'

"And the hermit went his way, meditating deeply on the wondrous ways of the Lord. Thus doth wisdom come out of the mouth of babes."

The Emir listened to my tale with great attention, and at its conclusion was pleased to say, that it had afforded him entertainment. Thus we sat, our conversation, which was interspersed with many similar tales, relieved at intervals with coffee, served in small gold fingans, and pipes, till eleven o'clock, when we separated for the night.

On my way to my chamber I saw a number of

the Amira's Georgian slaves. Observing some of them apparently bewailing some misfortune, I asked them the cause of their unhappiness. "We weep," cried one of them, "because we are far from our homes and kindred." To which I replied, "Maidens, your wailing is senseless and devoid of reason; for is it not much better that ye should have fallen into the hands of a virtuous Christian prince, whose ways are righteous, and who walks in the fear of God, than that ye should have been carried violently into the harem of some Moslem, who would have held you of no more account than his other slaves? Here you can follow the faith of your fathers in peace and security; while there you must have submitted to the ceremonial of a worship which ye abhor.

After thanking me for the consolation which I had endeavoured to administer to them, they bade me good night, saying—"O beloved of our hearts, thou hast spoken the words of truth, and the Almighty has sent thee to comfort us." Having said these words they retired, in groups of two or three, each group (for they are afraid to sleep alone) having a separate chamber.

CHAPTER VII.

Daily Life in the Emir's Palace—Visit to a Druse Lady—A Female Astrologer—A Prophecy—Interview with Lady Hester Stanhope—A Druse Priestess—Druse Shepherds and their Sheep—The Druse People—Their Origin and Religion.

THE Emir was a very early riser. The sun, therefore, had never long risen before the whole harem was up and stirring.

Having performed their morning devotions, the Prince and Princess partook of coffee, which was served them on the terrace, where they reclined on a diwan. A Mamaluke then brought the Emir's ralioun to the door, where it was received by the porter, who handed it to a negress, by whom again it was delivered to a female Georgian slave, who presented it to the Prince on her bended knee. The Amira not unfrequently, in order to show her

affection, insisted on performing these little services to the Emir herself, who always protested strongly against it.

After this, it was the Emir's custom to go forth into the council-chamber of his palace; where, having first breakfasted, he laboured assidiously in the arduous duties of his government, attended by his Mamelukes, both white and black, and surrounded by a motley crowd of Maronites, Druses, Turks, Motowlies, and Greeks; to all of whom his paternal hand was ever ready to administer impartial justice.

The Princess breakfasted alone in her room, on sherbet, a soup of chickens, rice milk, kaimagh (cream cheese), kharisha (a cheese containing odoriferous herbs from Mount Carmel,) dried fruits, and sweets of different kinds.

I one day went to pay a visit to my Druse acquaintance who had sent me the fruit which I was not destined to taste. She lived at about two hours distance from Beteddin, in a handsome building situated on the side of a mountain, near which was a Druse temple or hālouah, meaning literally, a solitude. On presenting myself at the gate I

was conducted into a large apartment, handsomely furnished, overlooking a beautiful garden, from which there was a fine sea view.

On the musnud in the middle of the floor, which was covered with a fine Persian carpet of an elegant pattern, having a rich border, in which flowers of all kinds were faithfully represented, I beheld a venerable Druse with a long white beard, having on his head the peculiar round white turban constantly worn by the akals,—a term denoting wisdom, and used to distinguish the upper or noble class of that people from the rest of the community,—who are called djahels.

Reclining on the musnud, by his side, with crossed legs, *à l'Orientale*, smoking a long and elegantly mounted nerghila, was a tall and splendid figure, dressed in a long saffron-coloured robe with red stripes, an embroidered sadrīeh fastened at the throat by an aigrette of gold, whose appearance, though somewhat wan, was dignified and majestic. Although the figure was attired in all respects as a man, I at once discovered that it belonged to the other sex. Her right hand grasped the stem of her pipe, which

ever and anon sent out a thin stream of light blue smoke, which curled upwards like a slender column; and in her left she held a long rosary of amber, the beads of which she let fall one by one in slow succession.

On my entrance the venerable akal and the lady, whom I now perceived to be of extraordinary stature, rose to receive me. After the usual compliments, I was invited to seat myself by their side, and I soon entered into conversation with the Druse on ordinary matters. All this time I perceived that the lady in male attire was scanning me from head to foot, with a look of such intense scrutiny, that I could not help feeling somewhat disconcerted, though I could scarcely tell why.

She then addressed me with great courtesy and benevolence of manner, in Arabic, which she spoke with great fluency and elegance, although I thought from her accent, as well as from her features and complexion, that she was not a native of the East. "You," said she, "are from the land of the wise. It was in Chaldea that science first dawned; it was there that astronomy, astrology, and magic attained their highest perfection." She then asked me if I

was skilled in astrology; to which I replied, that my father being no great believer in the science, had discouraged me from devoting much of my time to its study, enjoining me rather to make myself acquainted with the Word of God, and devote myself to the cultivation of the Christian virtues, than to seek knowledge of futurity in the stars; from which, he said, it was not given to weak man to read the impenetrable decrees of the All Wise.

This appeared to cause her no small disappointment; for she doubtless reckoned on hearing some important mysteries unravelled by one recently arrived from the land of divination.

"I have devoted," she said, "much time to the study of the stars, and, I trust, not without profit. For instance, on looking attentively into your countenance, whilst you were engaged in conversation with my venerable friend, I, without difficulty made out the star under which your birth took place. It is sufficient for me to look attentively at the eyes and forehead of any person, to tell with certainty the star of his nativity, and your's is the Nejmal el Atared."—"Mercury."

"That is quite true," said I. "An astrologer in Chaldea told me the same thing, and also the great astrologer at Damascus, called Sulieman el Hakim."

"I know him well," said she, her countenance lighted up with increased animation at finding her divination thus confirmed, "and there lives not a man more deeply skilled in the divine art." "We are all born," she continued, "under some of the celestial bodies, and our destiny is settled in this world by the benignant or malignant character of our natal star. This is our fate, and it is idle and useless to struggle against its resistless power. Whence comes it that man conceives a mortal antipathy towards his brother man at first sight? Because they were born under stars having opposing influences. The man born under the influence of the lamb will feel an insupportable repugnance and dread when he finds himself brought in contact with one born under the sign of the tiger, and will seek to avoid him. This is the decree of fate."

This I did not attempt to dispute, though not placing great faith in the science of astrology; but I maintained that, although Heaven might decree that a man should be born under a par-

ticular influence, which might give his nature a leaning towards virtue or vice, meekness or ferocity, still that it never failed to furnish him with powers which, if rightly exerted, are abundantly sufficient to vanquish the evil prompting of the human heart.

After some further conversation on astrological subjects, I began to speak of a project which I had long cherished, of paying a visit to Europe, expressing the delight which I anticipated on beholding the Christian virtues displayed in all their purity and splendour, illustrated by piety and learning, and fostered by the protecting arm of an enlightened government.

At this announcement of my wishes and intentions, the guest of my Druse friend laughed outright, and, clapping her hands after the Eastern fashion, said, "You have been greatly imposed upon by some artful and designing person. Europe, it is true, was once the home of Christianity and the school of Christian virtue, but that is now as a tale which is told, a thing of the past. The sun of Europe is set, and in the hearts of her degenerate sons there remains not so much as a spark of the

virtues of their forefathers. Piety and learning have been replaced by low cunning and intrigue, by carnal self-seeking and hypocrisy. You will see nothing but degeneracy and corruption. Stay where you are, and you will at least see religion, untainted with dark schemes of self interest and personal aggrandizement, and animating pure and simple breasts. I was both born and bred in Europe; I have travelled much, and mixed in the society of most of the European communities, and I solemnly assure you that you will bitterly lament the day when you quitted these peaceful mountains for the strife and turmoil of society in the West."

I marked well her words, but I had heard so much of European virtue and godliness, that I was not shaken in my determination by her ominous warning. Now, however, that I have been so long tossed about on the sea of misfortune, still far, alas! as ever from the peaceful haven to which I fondly thought I was hastening when I quitted the Lebanon, I feel that those words were the words of a true prophetess, arising from a pure and benevolent heart smarting with disappointment at the perfidy

and falsehood by which she had been surrounded in earlier days; and that she who uttered them was no mere pretender in the art of astrology. How often have I repented with bitter tears my rash resolve, and wished, now that it is too late, that I had listened in time to the wise caution which I then received, and which, had I followed it, would have spared me years of sorrow and anguish! But who can anticipate or avoid his destiny!—Who can divine the ends of Providence! So true is it, as the Arab proverb says, "All reverence and power to the Almighty Father. Away with grief and take no thought for the future. Seek not to know the past, nor strive to divine that which is to come, for everything is ruled by wisdom and the decrees of Providence."

A Druse sheikh formed one of our party, who pretended that he possessed the power of divining the hiding place of treasure concealed in the earth, and said that he knew, at that very moment, of a hoard buried close to the sea shore, near the place where, according to tradition, Jonas was cast ashore by the whale. I asked him how it came to pass that he had not turned this knowledge to his own

advantage, having reason to know that he was by no means in flourishing circumstances, and that any means of increasing his wealth must have been seized by him with avidity.

"The reason is plain," said he, "for it is well known, that if the magician once turns his art to further his own ends and increase his wealth, his power straightway leaves him never to return."

This, I thought, looked very like a poor subterfuge to avoid being put to the proof. But my hostess's astrological friend, who, I discovered, was also a firm believer in the magic art, said that the sheikh was right, and that the magician was forbidden to use his arts for his own benefit.

Soon afterwards, she rose, and bidding us farewell, took her departure, attended by a large retinue. A spirited charger stood at the gate, champing the bit with fiery impatience. She put her foot in the stirrup, and vaulting nimbly into the saddle, which she, after the Oriental fashion, bestrode like a man, started off at a rapid pace, galloping over rock and mountain, in advance of her suite, with a fearlessness and address which would have done honour to a Mameluke.

I was extremely curious to know the name of this eccentric lady, and put the question to my hostess. "That," said she, "is Lady Hester Stanhope."

I was enchanted to learn that I had been conversing with one of whom I had heard so much. We afterwards became very intimate, and I spent many delightful hours in her society.

After some time spent in conversation, respecting the character of the singular personage who had just quitted us, my hostess proposed that we should pay a visit to a Druse priestess, a relation of her's, who lived a short distance off. We accordingly set out on foot, and soon reached her dwelling, a well built and capacious house, shaded in front by wide spreading trees, under one of which the priestess was seated on a carpet, enjoying the afternoon breeze. Suspended from a stout branch of the tree under which she reclined swung a cradle, in which a young child lay fast asleep. A vast number of sheep were grazing in the field in front of the house, some of enormous fatness, lying in small troughs dug in the ground. This is a custom much in vogue among the Druses, to afford their

sheep, which they fatten till they attain a most unwieldy bulk, a cool place to lie in during the heat of the day. Their tails are of such prodigious weight as almost to prevent their walking. In order to relieve them from this burden, the Druse shepherds attach a small carriage to the sheep, when they are removing from one pasture to another, on which this most inconvenient appendage is supported.

On seeing us approach, the priestess rose, and saluted us with the words, "Naharaki said ya Sitte,"—"May this day be one of happiness for you, O lady,"—and invited me to seat myself by her side. We soon got into conversation, in which she showed much intelligence and courtesy. Indeed, I know no people who possess more amiability of manner and freedom from prejudice than the Druses. Christian, Mahometan, and Jew are alike treated by them with civility and respect. They are in the habit of sending their children to be educated by Christians, which not unfrequently ends in their conversion to the faith of their instructors. Their education completed, an effort is made to initiate them into the mysteries of the

Druse religion; should the child however persist in his adherence to Christianity, and refuse to be initiated, I never heard that such a determination led either to his persecution or estrangement from his friends or relations,—an example of charity and toleration not unworthy of Christian imitation.

The Druses show a laudable anxiety that their children should receive the advantages of education. Few of these people are without some sprinkling of knowledge, and many among their akhals, or learned men, are remarkable for their acquirements and wisdom. In this their priestesses are greatly distinguished, even above the priests, and, as I have been given to understand by a Druse, often preach from a sort of pulpit in the Hālouah.

We conversed for a long time together, and she manifested a great curiosity to be informed of the habits, customs, and opinions of the country from which I came, and put a multitude of questions with great acuteness and sagacity.

When we had been for some time conversing on these topics, she rose, and called to her friends to come and join us, saying, "Come and see; here is an accomplished stranger from the East come to

visit us. Come and offer her a welcome:"—with a host of expressions of so flattering a nature that I should blush to write them.

A number of her friends immediately came forth, and joined our party; and a more kind-hearted, unaffected assemblage I never met; they all treated me with the greatest attention and regard.

As this happened to be one of their church-going days, and the hour fixed for the celebration of their mysteries had arrived, they all shortly after departed, to perform their religious exercises at a neighbouring Hālouah, leaving me alone with the infant in the cradle.

Although extremely liberal in matters of religion, and tolerant to those who differ from them on these subjects, they strictly prohibit the intrusion of the profane into their sanctuaries. Whilst celebrating their rites, they place sentinels, at certain distances, on all the approaches to their Hālouah, with orders to prevent all intrusion, to warn all strangers from the spot, and to put to death all who persist in thrusting themselves within the forbidden precincts.

As soon as the company had departed, I seized one of the narrow-mouthed vessels used for drinking,

and, filling it with water from a neighbouring rivulet, baptized the infant in the cradle, a male child, about two years old, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, calling him Paul. Indeed, I never lost an opportunity of doing this whenever I could do so unperceived. Heaven send that the seed which, however rashly and ignorantly, I have sown in earnestness and humility may bear the fruit of true faith.

The Druses, it is thought, are descended from an Arab tribe, which, refusing to follow the faith inculcated by Mahomet, fled for safety to the Lebanon, where they have remained ever since, in the observance of their own religious ceremonies. By others they are said to be descended from those Jews who, in the wilderness, abandoned the worship of the true God, and set up a golden calf.

Their religious ceremonies are a profound secret to the rest of the world, and likely so to continue, as long as they are able to exclude the profane as effectually as now.

The time was when I had it in my power to penetrate this mystery. The Emir Beschir had been engaged in subduing some tribes of this people, who had risen in rebellion against his

authority. Among the spoils which he had brought home, after the termination of the campaign, which ended, as usual, in the subjugation of the rebellious Druses by his resistless arms, were two or three golden calves, of great size and weight, enriched with jewels of great value, the eyes being represented by splendid brilliants. Besides these trophies from the Druse Hālouahs, he brought home a number of books, containing the mysteries of the Druse faith, together with the forms of prayer in use in their Hālouahs. I have no doubt that the Emir Beschir himself was well acquainted with the whole scheme of the Druse religion.

The books I have mentioned were all written in Arabic, and locked in a chamber, of which I always kept the key, so that no obstacle interposed to prevent me from making myself acquainted with their contents, save the religious scruples implanted in my mind from the earliest infancy, which were so strong, that, although I often longed violently to take a peep, they always enabled me to vanquish the promptings of my curiosity. I had been taught to regard the reading of the Koran, or of anything, in short, except the writings

of those of the Catholic faith, as being of itself a great occasion of sin to the believer. Since that time, my eyes have been opened, and the mists which my ignorance and misconception of the rules of the Catholic Church on this subject had raised before them, have been dispelled. I never cease to regret that I allowed to escape so rare an opportunity of bringing the religious system of this ancient, singular, and mysterious people to the light. In fact, the Catholic Church never did lay down the narrow rule, which, in my youth, I had imagined. Certainly there are some dangers which one must flee from, and these we are commanded by the church to flee from. But there are others, which, to avoid, one must look in the face. Again, there are others which subsist but in one's own idle fears; and this was one of them. What reason had I for any apprehension of danger to my faith from the reading of these absurd Druse books? Certainly it was an idle apprehension; and in that light alone the Catholic Church regards it.

It is not by shutting himself up in his cabin that the sailor escapes the dangers of his vocation; neither does the traveller escape the samiri by

blindfolding his eyes, that he may not see the red speck on the horizon, which, indicating the approach of the suffocating blast, indicates also the moment and the manner of avoiding it.

The Druses, it appears, worship the golden calf, like the votaries of Baal in the olden time. The form of worship used by the akhals is different from that practiced by the djahels or lower class. They venerate the names of Moses, Christ, and Mahomet. Their religious rites are performed twice a week, at which men and women attend together. They acknowledge a sovereign pontiff, who resides in the village of Mouta.

The priestess to whom I was now on a visit told me, that when a Druse wishes to put away his wife, he, without giving any previous notice, sticks up a paper containing, in very few words, a declaration of his intention, on the wall of his room. Should the wife cast her eye on this paper her doom is sealed, the husband cries out, "You have read your fate;" and the wife immediately covers her face with her veil, and quits her husband's house, alone, for her parent's roof, leaving behind her all her children.

When a Druse dies, those who have known him during his lifetime assemble round his grave and give evidence as to his conduct during life. If the testimony be of a favourable character, the akhal who officiates, cries out, "May the All Powerful Ruler of All be merciful to you;" which is repeated by the bystanders. Should the testimony be to the disadvantage of the deceased, both the akhal and the assembled multitude maintain a solemn silence.

The Druses receive the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, and believe, that according as a man has been distinguished during life for wisdom, virtue, and courage, crime, folly, and cowardice, his soul will pass into the shape of a good man respected and beloved by mankind, or be doomed to dwell in the carcase of a camel, a dog, or a pig. The Druses often attend service in the Maronite churches, and are in general very well acquainted with the doctrine taught there, often displaying considerable familiarity with the Word of God.

The Druse women, on meeting a stranger, cover all the face except the left eye. A Druse is as hospitable as any Arab of the desert, and in the exercise of this virtue makes no distinction between

Jew or Gentile, affording the shelter of his roof, and the good things of his table to Christian, Moslem, and Motowli, without stint or scruple. For Europeans they entertain a peculiar affection. It is from this circumstance, combined with others perhaps, that this people is supposed by many in the East to be the descendants of crusaders.

CHAPTER VIII.

An Eastern Garden—A Fanatic—The Tables Turned—Lady Hester Stanhope—An Emir's Stud of Horses—Extraordinary Mare—The Sacred Ass—The Messiah—Djezzar Pasha—Anecdotes of His Cruelties—The Emir Kassim—A Race of Heroes—The Baths of Beteddin.

One of my chief delights, whilst at Beteddin, consisted in rising before daybreak and visiting a garden belonging to the Emir, at a short distance from the palace.

This garden encircled a kasr or palace, to which the Emir often repaired for diversion; a building fitted up with the greatest taste, provided with extensive balconies to enjoy the evening breeze, and containing splendid iwāns, sumptuously adorned with all that wealth could procure in the way of furniture and decoration from Bagdad and Damascus.

The garden itself extended over a large space of

ground, and was filled with every kind of fruit and flower which could tempt the appetite, charm the sense, or delight the eye, arranged in compartments of varied form, divided by running streams.

Here I often spent many hours in enchanting solitude, whilst the inhabitants of Beteddin were yet wrapped in slumber. Here I have watched the brightness of the morning star gradually waining in the reddening glow of the rising sun, which came ushered in by the song of countless birds of every note, singing the glories of their great Creator, and sporting, in the exuberant gladness of their little hearts, from tree to tree, now drinking from the clear stream, now rustling amid the beds of sweet-scented flowers, whose fragrance, driven from its home by the noisy intruders, rose from the dew-spangled ground, and filled the air with its sweetness. With what feelings of ecstacy have I joined my offerings of praise and thanksgiving to Almighty God, in concert with these light-hearted songsters! Then was my love stronger than that of the lover, who drinks the joys of paradise from the eyes of his beloved.

There was a relation of the Emir, a venerable man about sixty years of age, who had from his

youth upwards steadily adhered to the faith of the prophet, turning a deaf ear to the exhortations, and a closed eye to the example, of his illustrious relative, who ruled over the mountain. This man, who carried his religious opinions to fanaticism, had somehow or other got it into his head that destiny had laid upon him the task of bringing my rebellious spirit to bow to the Moslem faith. He was a great frequenter of the garden I have just described, where we often had severe contests upon religious points.

Whenever we happened to meet there he always contrived to throw down his carpet, or his benish, in the absence of this essential part of a true Mussulman's equipage, close by me, so that I was forced to hear every word of his devout exercise, which he always went through with great apparent fervour, reciting his prayers so fast, and in so loud a voice, that it was quite impossible to withdraw one's attention to any other subject. It was in vain to think of escaping the infliction by shifting my place, for no sooner had I taken up my position in another part of the garden, than there was my tormentor close by my side, filling the air with his invocations to the prophet.

At length my politeness gave way, and I resolved to remonstrate. An opportunity was not long wanting. The very next time I visited the garden, the old Emir sought me out, and throwing his praying carpet on the ground, first performed his "El twadda," or ablutions, and then began as usual crying out—"El hamdullilah w'lsalah wisalām ala rasoul Allah salah Allah alēhi w'sālam,"—(praise be to God, and blessing and peace on the prophet of God, whom God hath blessed and received with greeting.) After which he performed nine mattaniaths, falling on his face and kissing the ground.

"Wherefore is it, O Emir," I said, "that you cease not to persecute me with your endless forms and ceremonies, which you know I hold in detestation and abhorrence? Are not these gardens large, and is there not room enough both for you and me to pray in peace, each after his own fashion? Wherefore, then, this unceasing persecution? Have I offended in aught, that I should be thus singled out for annoyance?" Saying this, I suddenly caught up his carpet from under him, and threw it with all my strength to another part of the garden.

The Emir remained on his knees, dumb with astonishment. At length he found his tongue.—

"Ah ia Sitte!" said he, "the time will come when your eyes will be opened to the truth of the religion inculcated by the blessed prophet. With his blessing, therefore, I will not cease to impress it upon you till this happy moment shall arrive."

"It will never arrive, and you will never see it, though you should live a thousand years," said I; "sooner could I convert the whole Mahomedan population on the face of the earth, Sûnis, Shiahs, and all, to Christianity."

"The time will come, the time will come," said the Emir, shaking his head; "the prophet will aid me to enlighten your understanding." Whereupon we fell into our usual controversy about our respective creeds, in which he warned me to beware of obstinacy, lest he should see me in the last day riding on the back of a Jew (which people, the Mahomedans believe, are destined to be transformed at the last day into the form of asses, and in that shape serve to convey the Christians to perdition); to hear the sentence of my eternal condemnation pronounced. I on my side accused him, and his fellow-believers in the prophet, of returning voluntarily to error, when the truths of salvation had been proclaimed on the house tops, and of turning

their faces from the glorious sun of Christianity to wander in the darkness of the shadow of death.

"Mashallah! thou art, I see, an astrologer, like the Queen of Tadmor," at length he exclaimed, and wishing me good day, departed to seek his lost carpet. Notwithstanding his firm conviction that success must in the end crown his efforts for my conversion, I, after many long struggles, succeeded in turning the tables, and had at last the satisfaction of seeing him received into the bosom of the Christian church. In truth, he was a good and worthy man, of an upright and sincere character, and I have no doubt whatever that his exertions to bring me within the pale of Islam, were dictated by a real anxiety for the salvation of my soul.

The Queen of Tadmor, as Lady Hester Stanhope was commonly called by the inhabitants of the desert, and all the Bedouin tribes, was on most friendly terms with the Emir Beschir and his family, and a constant visitant to the garden, so that we were soon on terms of intimacy.

This extraordinary woman, who, bred among all the refinements of a people in the most advanced state of their civilization, abandoned all the comforts and luxuries which her high position in that

community placed within her reach, for the society of a wild, but generous and brave race, was held in the highest veneration by the Druses, Maronites, and the other tribes dwelling on the mountain, and was always visited by all the sheikhs of wandering Arab tribes happening to pass in the neighbourhood of her dwelling, who came to pay her homage, bringing with them valuable presents, such as camels, gazelles, &c., for which they always received corresponding marks of esteem from her ladyship.

So little did she regret her voluntary banishment from the haunts of European civilization, and so entire was her preference for the simple character of the people with whom she had identified herself, that she sometimes carried her detestation of European cold-heartedness and want of common hospitality, to intolerance. I remember on one occasion a frank (a French gentleman, I believe), happening to pass by Beteddin, the Emir Beschir, who was ever forward to show attention to Europeans, sent him an invitation to spend a few days at his palace, which he accepted. On his departure for Jerusalem he was supplied with a quantity of fowls, and all kinds of provisions necessary for his journey. The

stranger, full of gratitude for the generous hospitality which he had experienced, was most anxious to make the servant, by whom these presents were sent, a certain gratuity in money, which he, however, positively declined, assuring the stranger that it would be as much as his head was worth to accept it. Lady Stanhope was present when the retainer came to relate to the Emir the circumstances of the stranger's departure, and on hearing that he had refused the stranger's proffered kindness, she exclaimed — "His conduct was both wise and humane, for, when that traveller reaches the shores of Europe, he will have need of all his treasure, inasmuch as he will there find no one who will give him as much as a crust of bread, without receiving money in exchange."

Lady Hester was also held in high esteem by the Jews, on account of a sympathy which that people fancied that she felt with some of their religious sentiments, and their bankers and merchants were ever ready to render her all the assistance in their power, and were often able to do her effective service. She expected a regenerator of the world, or second Messias, who was to purge the world from the wickedness and abominations by which

he breaketh up the earth with his hoof, he pranceth boldly; he goeth forward to meet armed men; he despiseth fear; he turneth not his back to the sword; above him shall the quiver rattle, the spear and shield shall glitter; chafing and raging he swalloweth the ground; neither doth he make account when the noise of the trumpet soundeth; when he heareth the trumpets he saith, ha! ha! he smelleth the battle afar off, the encouraging of the captains, and the shouting of the army."

Among these steeds was a mare of extraordinary beauty, which the Emir Beschir had purchased from a sheikh at a large sum—forty purses, as near as I remember. Seeing that Lady Hester had taken a particular fancy to this mare, the Emir, who entertained a high respect for her ladyship, made her a present of her. The sanad, or certificate of her nobility ran, as well as I recollect, as follows:—

"In the name of God, the all merciful and clement, to whom we look for aid and succour. The prophet hath said, 'My people shall never assemble together for the maintenance of error.' Behold the object of the present writing: we the undersigned declare before God, certify and attest by our oaths, by our destiny, by our heads, our hands, and by the graves of our ancestors, that the

bay mare with certain marks (describing them), is descended from a noble race, both by the father's and mother's side, by three direct and consecutive applications; and that she possesses, moreover, all the qualities of the mares spoken of by the prophet, who says, 'their teats shall be treasures, and their backs thrones of honour.' This certificate rests on the testimony of our forefathers, which we attest, and God knoweth all things best."

The mare, whose high qualities were thus authenticated, was sent to Lady Hester Stanhope's paddock, together with a beautiful female ass, said to be a lineal descendant of the ass on which our Saviour rode on his entry into Jerusalem. Lady Hester Stanhope often suffered from a malady for the relief of which asses milk was supposed to possess great efficacy, and it was the knowledge of this circumstance which prompted this additional attention on the part of the generous hearted Emir.

A Greek priest, who now and then paid us a visit at Beteddin, told me an anecdote connected with this ass, whose descendants are so highly prized in the East. The four hoofs of the animal on the back of which Christ entered Jerusalem, are preserved in some place, the name of which does

not now occur to my memory, with religious care and veneration, and kept in a glass case, in order to protect them from injury; on festivals they are carried with great pomp in the religious processions. A designing mountebank, some years ago, went about showing a hoof, which he asserted positively to have belonged to the sacred animal in question, stating that he had himself dug it out of the ground, where it had lain for upwards of 1800 years. His imposture was so successful that he realized a considerable sum of money by exhibiting the supposed relic to vast numbers of the fanatical and credulous Christians of Russia, till he chanced one day to show his prize to a priest of the Greek church, who knew where the four hoofs (which he had seen) were to be found, and submitted that it was nowhere stated that the animal possessed five; which at once put an end to the imposture.

Some months afterwards Lady Hester sent a messenger to inform us that the mare had given birth to a foal of great beauty, and having on its back a remarkable excrescence, forming a complete natural saddle, of the Turkish form. This her ladyship declared to be a miraculous act of Divine Providence, and expressed her determination to

reserve the foal for the use of the Regenerator, whose coming she awaited with a faith so steady; whereat the Emir, who by no means sympathized in this delusion, laughed outright. There is a tradition in the East, that at the Messias's second coming, he will come riding on a horse, having a natural saddle on his back.

The Emir Beschir had three sons, each of whom lived in a magnificent palace near that of their father. They were all married. The eldest son was named Kassim. He was a man of a quiet and grave turn of mind, about fifty years of age, and but little disposed to mix in the turmoil and strife of politics. His resignation to the will of Providence was complete as became the true Christian; and so careful was he to avoid giving offence even to the meanest, that he always sought the earliest opportunity of making reparation to any one of his own servants and dependents to whom he might hastily have given offence. The great aim of his existence appeared to be to perfect himself in virtue, and, to this end, he always entreated his friends, myself amongst the number, as the greatest favour they could confer on him, to tell him frankly of his faults, so that he might seek to amend them; and what

was more, he never took offence when some, more candid than the rest, ventured to take him at his word. His wife was a woman of amiable character and excellent education, for, not only could she read and write, themselves regarded as learning in an Oriental woman, but she had cultivated poetry with considerable success. She was an intimate friend of mine, and we often rambled together on foot over the mountains and valleys in the neighbourhood of her husband's palace, seeking objects worthy of her bounty, of which she was never sparing in cases of real calamity and distress.

Some years before my stay at Beteddin, he had been a prisoner on parole, in the palace of the celebrated Djezzar Pasha at Acre. During his confinement he had ample opportunities of observing the character of this powerful though sanguinary and remorseless ruler, and often entertained us with anecdotes of his conduct and eccentricities.

When Djezzar Pasha found himself at the point of death, he determined to have several of his prisoners, noble Syrians, whom he had despoiled of their power and wealth to bestow them on his own creatures, put to death forthwith, reasoning thus:

"If these men obtain their liberty when I am no more, it cannot be doubted that they will instantly repair to the seat of their former power and influence, and by their efforts to recover that which they have lost, plunge whole districts into anarchy and bloodshed, setting every man against his brother, and inciting the peaceable to violence and turmoil. It is better, therefore, that they should die at once that many may live." Fortunately, he did not live long enough to carry his bloody design into execution, and his intended victims obtained their liberty. Instances of similar barbarity might be multiplied till volume after volume was filled with the atrocious cruelties of this man, whose chief delight it was to slaughter his victims with his own hand, and whose name is a bye-word in Syria, for all that is abominable in human nature. Even he, however, had occasionally his fits of justice and humanity, one of which I will recount as it was told me by the Emir Kassim.

There lived at Acre a Christian merchant, whose son also dwelt with him in the same house, which was built in a low situation close by the sea, and the lower apartments of which were in consequence exceedingly damp, although all above were airy

and healthy enough. The father abode on the upper story, and the son lived in the rooms below. The son being on the point of marriage, requested of his father, as a great favour, that he would consent to change apartments with him for fifteen or sixteen days, that he might show his bride becoming honour. To this the father willingly consented, and forthwith made room for the wedded couple.

Sixteen days passed away and yet the son showed no disposition to restore the old man his rooms. At length his health began to suffer from the change, and he remonstrated with his son on his want of good faith, who assured him, that his wife entertained so great a repugnance to descend, that he had been hitherto unsuccessful in his attempts to prevail upon her, and requested yet fifteen days grace, in which time he undertook to overcome her scruples. The father again yielded, and, although his health grew worse from day to day, he patiently waited till the period agreed upon had expired, when he again renewed his demand to be reinstated in his own apartments; whereupon, the son, with the utmost effrontery, told him that he had no intention whatever of changing his quarters, and warned the old man not to pester him with his

solicitations, upon which, the father left him absorbed in grief.

Djezzar, who always knew everything that was going on in the city, either by his own personal knowledge, (for, like the khalifs of old, he was fond of wandering about in disguise in search of adventures), or by information derived from some of his emissaries, who were ever on the alert to pick up intelligence, on learning these circumstances, sent guards to bring the young man before him; and when they had brought him, and he stood trembling beneath the stern and relentless gaze of the Pasha, who sat on his diwan, surrounded by his officers and executioners, any one of whom would have been ready at a word, to strike his head from his body with his drawn scymitar, Djezzar addressed him in a voice which, for its terror, perhaps, never had an equal, being more like the roaring of a lion or a bull than a human sound. Thundering out his name, he asked him of what religion he was? The young man, struck dumb with terror, was unable to utter a word. At length he faltered out in timid accents, that he was of the Christian communion; thinking all the while, that they would be the last words he should ever utter.

"You say you are a Christian," said the Pasha; "let me see you then make the sign by which the Christians are known." Whereupon the young man crossed himself. "But let me hear distinctly the words which accompany that sign," shouted out Djezzar, putting his hand on his dagger.

"Bismil ab w' leben w' lroukh alkaddus."—"In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost;" cried the young man, half dead with affright, repeating the sign of the cross, in which, as all are aware, the finger points first to the head, then to the heart, and then to the two shoulders.

"It seems, then," said the Pasha, "that your religion teaches you that the Father should be above and the Son beneath. Hence, thou accursed imp of injustice, and let me hear that thou hast conformed to the rules of thy faith, if thou wishest to keep thy head on thy shoulders" It will readily be believed that the father was not long in obtaining his just rights.

These fits of justice were however but occasional rays of light which scarcely relieved for a moment the dark lowering clouds of his unceasing cruelties. The Emir Kassim assured me—my very heart sickens at the thought—that he had seen one of this

monster's wives being carried, sown up in a sack, to be burned in a lime kiln. The cause, as usual, was jealousy. It was even said of him that, if he chanced to espy from his rosham any person whose appearance displeased him, he was in the habit of sending out his executioners to strangle the man, saying, "so ugly a fellow is unfit to live; he is assuredly one of the devil's children."

The wife of the Emir Kassim was a woman of great piety, and regularly summoned her establishment to hear prayers, both morning and evening, when she usually read some chapters out of the Bible herself. A warm attachment soon sprung up between us, which, alas! was destined too soon to be broken asunder, for I had scarcely known her two years when she was prematurely cut off in childbirth. The awkward Eastern custom of burying the dead seven hours after their decease was followed in her case, and I have often been haunted with the frightful idea that my poor dear friend may have been interred alive.

The Emir Kassim was for a long time inconsolable, and remained plunged in the deepest sorrow. At length, when the full tide of his grief

had somewhat abated, his loneliness became a grievous burden to him, and he was most anxious to discover a worthy successor to the amiable creature whom Providence had so sternly snatched from his arms.

Knowing the tender feeling which had existed between his late wife and myself, he sought my advice in the selection of her successor. Thus appealed to, I strongly recommended him to take to wife a beautiful yonng Georgian, who had recently been purchased by the Emir Beschir. She was a woman who united the graces of a most amiable temper and affectionate disposition, to personal charms of no common order. Her hair was like gilded bronze, and her eyes dark, soft, and full of expression.

The Emir Kassim at once fell into my views, and besought me to use every effort to bring about the marriage. Accordingly I went at once to the great Amira, and broached the matter to her. How difficult is it for even the best of women to resist the promptings of jealousy, when it becomes a question of elevating an inferior to an equality with herself! The Amira was the very soul of amia-

bility and good nature. She seemed to have a great regard for the Georgian whom I was so anxious to unite in marriage with her stepson, and who at this very time was amongst her attendants in the harem, and yet, notwithstanding this, she treated the idea of such an union as the very height of folly, and offered all the opposition in her power to it's accomplishment.

I was thus placed in a most delicate and embarrassing position. By promoting the marriage of the Emir Kassim with this young Christian, whom I knew to be in every respect worthy of the high station to which such an union would have elevated her, I ran a serious risk of offending, perhaps for ever, the Amira, whom I both loved and esteemed. Determined, however, that no consideration of personal consequences should deter me from following the just path, I persevered in my efforts, taxing the Amira with injustice and oppression scarcely worthy of a heathen, much less of a Christian.

At length, finding persuasion and reproach alike unavailing, to move the Princess from her purpose, I put my trust in Providence and broke the matter to the Emir, with whose concurrence the marriage

was ultimately brought about. For some time afterwards I fancied I observed a coldness in the Amira's deportment towards me, but she had too good a heart to cherish even the semblance of rancour for any length of time, and we were soon, therefore, on our old footing of intimacy and affection.

As for the Amira Kassim, her gratitude knew no bounds. She called me her guardian angel, the author of all her happiness, and wished to load me with valuable presents, which I refused, telling her that what I had done, I had done out of the love of justice and the glory of God, who would not fail to reward me, if indeed the performance of an obvious duty could claim aught of reward. She, nevertheless, forced me to accept a beautiful European watch, set round with diamonds, as a token of her affection and esteem.

The Emir's second son was called Khalil (signifying the beloved). He was between forty and fifty, and was renowned for his enterprise, his dauntless courage and skill in the art of war, so that he was regarded as the hero of the Shehab family. He was a Christian, married, and the father of two daughters and eight sons, born in eight suc-

cessive years, all of them young giants. The eldest was an especial favourite of Ibrahim Pasha, son of Mehemet Ali, who had presented the handsome youth with a magnificent sword.

The third son, the Emir Amin (signifying the faithful), surpassed all his brothers in intelligence and learning. He was the most celebrated poet in the Lebanon, and his conversation was particularly distinguished for brilliancy and wit. He was deeply versed in politics, and enjoyed, in an eminent degree, the confidence of his father, the great Emir, by whom he was always called his right arm, and entrusted with the ring of government. He was both taller and handsomer than any of his brothers, and had a peculiarly dignified expression of countenance. His nobility was in his soul, and asserted itself in the superiority of his mental and moral excellencies. Haughtiness he had none, nor was it possible to detect in him the slightest difference of tone, whether he addressed the most powerful Emir or the poorest shepherd; a liberality of conduct however, not uncommon in the East, where it never appears to be forgotten, either by Christian or Turk, that mankind are all

sprung from one common stock, equal in their birth, equal in their death. Whilst out hunting he often met common shepherds, who thought it no presumption to join in the sport with the favourite son of their ruler, whom they treated with respect, but, at the same time, with perfect equality, receiving at his hands a like treatment, as far from haughty condescension as from petulant arrogance. On meeting each other you heard the usual Oriental salutations, "May this day be a happy one for you." "May God grant you strength," exchanged with perfect cordiality and hearty good will.

Notwithstanding this preference which his superior talents procured him over his elder brethren, the breath of jealousy never passed their lips, or manifested itself in any part of their conduct towards him; on the contrary, they always expressed their satisfaction that it had pleased Providence to endow him with talents so calculated to give stability to his father's government, and rejoiced in the honours heaped on his head.

He was married, but had no children, a circumstance which grieved him sorely, and rendered his

wife almost inconsolable. Day and night she offered up fervent prayers to the Almighty, that he would vouchsafe to remove from her the curse and disgrace of barrenness, so she might no longer be held lightly by her friends and neighbours. Constant and unceasing were her visits to the various churches and convents far and near, to procure the intercession of their patron saints in her behalf; but all her efforts had hitherto been unsuccessful. She would often read the history of Sarah, the wife of Abraham, and then shed floods of tears. She was passionately fond of flowers, to which she devoted a great deal of time, having great delight in arranging beautiful bouquets, which she placed in vases in her room, often fastening one on the stem of her nerghila.

As her husband's attendance was so necessary at Beteddin, the Amira was a constant inmate of the harem, so that I enjoyed a great deal of her society, and spent many delightful hours with her on bathing days.

The baths at Beteddin were on a scale of great magnificence, and consisted of no less than six different chambers. Besides the usual bathing

rooms, there was at the extremity of the building, close by the garden, a large pavilion, constructed entirely of glass, a short time before my arrival, at a vast outlay, by architects from Damascus.

In front of this pavilion, and in the centre of the hall, was a beautiful fountain, throwing out copious streams of water, clear as chrystal, which was received in a capacious basin below, thronged with gold and silver fish, around which were ranged statues, from which proceeded soft musical sounds, produced by a mechanical apparatus moved by the action of the water. Around the outer edge of the pavilion were ranged diwans, covered with rich stuffs, on which we used to sit and enjoy our coffee and nerghilas after bathing.

Many were the delightful hours which I spent in this charming retreat. These were scenes of true enjoyment, pure and unalloyed innocent pleasures, unbought by others woe or others shame, uninfluenced and unswayed alike by the laws of opinion or the wanton caprice of fashion. Here the warm affections of the unfettered heart, for husband, parent, child, flow unchecked, as nature prompts them, unchilled by dread of sneering ridi-

cule; and the benign instincts of our nature, planted in our hearts to bless our brief journey through this vale of tears, preserve in all their native glow of energy the warm and virtuous feelings of the heart.

CHAPTER IX.

Returning Good for Evil—Benevolence of the Emir Beschir—The Palace of Beteddin—Saint Alphonsus—A Trance—A Vision—Project of Visiting Europe—The Wise men of the East—Discovery of a Hidden Library—Origin of the Art of Healing—Leave-taking—A Mutiny—A Storm at Sea.

THE Emir always treated me with the highest respect and consideration, honouring me with his entire confidence, and willingly granting any favour I chose to ask. I will give one instance out of many.

One day, a fellow-countryman of mine came in a state of great perturbation and alarm to Beteddin, and requested I would grant him an interview, inasmuch as I was the only channel through which he could make his situation known to the great Prince.

He had incurred the high displeasure of the Pasha of Damascus, who had caused him to be arrested,

together with his whole family, and thrown into a dungeon. He had contrived to make his escape, and his son had been subjected to horrid tortures, for the purpose of forcing from him the disclosure of his father's hiding place, and the situation of a certain treasure which the Pasha fancied had been concealed somewhere to elude confiscation.

On beholding the man, I recognised him as an old and inveterate enemy of my family at Mosul, where he had used every art to bring ruin on our heads. His former haughty look was changed into an expression of deep dejection and sorrow. Who could resist the entreaty of a father supplicating assistance to save his son from cruel tortures, and an ignominous death? My wrongs were all forgotten; I immediately wrote a letter to the Emir Beschir stating the case, and craving his instant intercession with the enraged Pasha on behalf of both father and son, as I would have sought the life of my own father, or a brother nourished at the same breast as myself. "Go," said I, giving him the letter; "this will procure you an audience of the Great Prince, who, I doubt not, will do all in his power to save your son's life. Our Redeemer

hath said, 'Do good to them that hate you.' 'Forgive and ye shall be forgiven.'"

The Emir at once granted him an audience, and on learning the pressing exigency of the case, dispatched a Tator forthwith, with a letter to the Pasha of Damascus. Three days afterwards the Tator returned, bringing a letter from the Pasha stating, that the son had been released, that all the property seized had been restored, and that the father might now return without fear. The old man, on learning the news, was frantic with joy. At first he could hardly prevail on himself to believe it; but when at length he was convinced that it was no delusion, he threw himself at my feet, and with a flood of tears declared that no words could express the intensity of his gratitude. He assured me that henceforth I might look upon him and his as my slaves for ever. I assured him that my joy equalled his at his happy deliverance; but that my reward was in my own heart; that all I had done was done for the glory of God, and that I heartily wished I could spend the rest of my life in the performance of similar acts of duty.

I had been for a long time filled with an ardent

desire to visit Europe, where I believed the sun of Christianity to shine in all its glory, unobstructed by dark clouds of tyranny and unbelief. Besides, I had heard of the holiness to which some of the European priesthood had attained, and my eagerness to set foot on the land over which Providence had shed so regenerating an influence, and behold the children of her especial adoption, defied all controul. For two or three years past, I had at intervals opened my mind on the subject to my kind friend and protector, the Prince of the Lebanon, who always strongly opposed my determination, assuring me that my notions on the subject were greatly overstrained, and that I might attain to quite as high a degree of sanctity and virtue where I was, as in Europe, where, from the exalted notions which it was evident I had formed, I must in all probability be doomed to meet with a bitter disappointment, which I appeared to expect. "Piety and virtue," said the good Emir, "are not confined to this or that country; but are to be attained in all corners of the earth, if we will but diligently seek them."

Besides this, he always vowed that I should

on no account leave the Amira, and urged so many considerations of a friendly nature, that I never could find sufficient resolution to follow out my design.

The mountain, on which stood the palace of Beteddin, was surrounded by many other mountains, of the most picturesque form, and variety of character. One of these, named Mahsaf, whose summit commanded, perhaps, the most charming view in the world, embracing every beauty of land and sea that the mind can conceive, was a favourite place of resort for the Amira and her friends. From this eminence, the mountain on which the Emir's palace stands, was visible from its base to its summit, crowned by the noble building itself, rising in terraces, elevated one above the other, like a flight of steps built by daring giants, striving to reach the heavens. The Emir Amin had commenced building a magnificent summer palace on this mountain, which was approaching its completion when I quitted Syria. In the plain below sparkled innumerable rivulets, scattering fertility over the whole face of the valley with a prodigal hand. These rivulets

were fringed by groves of mulberry and other trees, and had been brought at a vast expense from the river Aasi by the Emir Beschir.

When I had been many years an inmate in the Emir's palace, the Amira went out one beautiful afternoon, according to custom, attended by a number of her friends, to enjoy their pipes and coffee on the Mahsaf. I accompanied them. On this occasion my love of solitude came over me with irresistible force, and leaving my companions, I strolled to an eminence which commanded the plateau on which they reclined, the view from which was still more extensive. Here I began plucking sweet smelling herbs, and delivering up my soul to a delightful reverie, surrounded by all that is beautiful in nature. I turned my eyes towards the deep blue Mediterranean, calm and unruffled as the cloudless heavens. Gradually as I gazed, lost in a reverie, the consciousness of surrounding objects waxed fainter, till my whole soul was wrapped in an extatic vision, and I fancied myself wafted to my land of promise in the West, where I hoped to perfect the work of my salvation.

I had just been reading a book written by Saint Alphonsus of Liquari, who had lately been canonized at Rome, in which the vanity of all earthly things, and the surpassing beauty of Christian virtue and spiritual works was urged in powerful and fervent language. I almost fancied in my short extatic trance, that I saw rising above the clear line of the horizon, the newly canonized saint, his countenance shining with heavenly benignity, and beaming with the light of holiness, stretching forth his hand, inviting me to hasten to the blessed land, in which he had planted the fruitful seed of a true and lively faith.

I awoke from my trance; but the vision had sunk deep into my heart, and I resolved to break asunder all ties of friendship and affection,—to relinquish honours, riches, and pleasures, to follow that which I regarded as a special intimation of Providence.

Accordingly, on my return to the palace, I requested an audience of the Prince, and imparted to him my settled determination to proceed at once to Rome. All the old arguments were again urged with increased force; but it was in vain. My

mind was made up to take the step, and all reasoning was unavailing. He at length gave his consent, for I told him that I regarded my vocation as one which it would be sinful to neglect, and I soon set about making preparations for my departure.

Whilst I was busily engaged in making the necessary arrangements, I received a letter from an old friend of my father's at Mardin, named Jebrail Khan, who had come from Diarbekir, and had reached Damascus, intending to embark for Europe. He was a man about fifty-five years of age, and of large landed possessions, which, according to the usual practice followed in that part of the East, from which he came, he let out to different tenants, receiving half the value of the produce as his share. With this arrangement, neither party thinks himself under an obligation to the other. The negociation is conducted on terms of perfect equality, and the landlord never dreams of attempting to coerce the tenant in any shape or way. He was, besides, a man of great wealth, which he devoted principally to charitable purposes, such as the foundation of schools for the

instruction of youth in the various branches of useful knowledge; with a view to the more extended diffusion of which, he had established many printing presses in his native place. He was a good and pious christian, and was held in high esteem by my late father. The chief aim of his existence was to strive by every means in his power to revive the appetite for learning and science, for which the East was so renowned in the olden time. He was now going to Rome, taking with him four youths, whom he designed to place in the College of the Propaganda, for the purpose of qualifying them to be the teachers of their fellow-countrymen in the arts and sciences. Admirable pursuit! How far preferable is such an expedient to a dependence on the mental succour to be derived from inefficient adventurers, who, possessed solely by low, selfish considerations, and incapable of conveying such an elevation of purpose as the devotion of their energies for the sole end of advancing the moral and intellectual welfare of their fellow-creatures, use their superior European intelligence only to extract from simple and kind-

hearted Orientals the means of gratifying their inordinate love of wealth.

Oh! that we had but the resolution to rise once more confidently in our own resources. Why is it that we are now compelled to wait for our mental food, when from the East was diffused the light of religion and of science? Arise once more my poor deluded fellow-country-men, let your dissension be hushed, and unite for the regeneration of your fallen race! Let us brush the dust of ages from the leaves of the books of our sages, the fountain heads of that knowledge which has made the son of the West so wise, that he curls the lip of scorn at his forefathers in the land of the rising sun. Let us no longer fear to behold, in the words of their wisdom, the evidence of our own degeneracy. There shall we find abundant stores of all those things for which the mind of man hungers and thirsts; good measure, pressed down and shaken together, and running over, and spreading light and plenty, where now all is darkness.

I recollect well my father recounting to me that one of my ancestors, Mor Yusuf, the first patriarch

of the Chaldean Catholics of that name, who was confirmed by Innocent the Second, discovered, in the catacombs of the Deir Raban Hormiz (which was built by the Chaldean Patriarch Tomarso, another of my ancestors, and which contains the tomb of the son of a Persian king, who fell a martyr to his adherence to the Christian faith by command of his father, the Shah, in the early centuries of Christianity), an immense library, containing some thousand volumes written in the Chaldean, Stangheli, ancient Syriac, Arabic, and other languages, treating of art and science. The tomb of this unfortunate and virtuous prince, is held in high veneration, not only by the Chaldeans and Syrians, but also by the Koords and Yezeedis.

The library was transferred to Diarbekir, and has been handed down from Patriarch to Patriarch, and always preserved by them with religious care, insomuch that no sum could ever tempt the guardian of this treasure to part with a single volume. My relation, Mar Augustinus, the last patriarch, strongly enjoined the present Archbishop of Diarbekir, my uncle, Mar Basilius Asmar, on no account to allow any part of this

library to leave the Patriarchate under any circumstances, whatever amount of persecution this determination might entail on him. I have not had an opportunity of examining this library; but I have no doubt, from what I have heard, that some of its volumes would throw considerable light on the condition of the early Christians in the East.

In Bagdad was produced the first specimen of that exquisite piece of mechanism, a watch; and was it not in one of our cities that six hundred hakim, or men cunning in the healing art, were maintained at the public expense, to cure the poor and helpless of the diseases with which it might please Providence to afflict them? Alas! how often does it happen in these days of darkness and ignorance, that the European quack, pretending to a knowledge of the healing science, reaps an abundant harvest of wealth from the credulous Orientals, by the sole charm of a name; because, forsooth, he comes from the land, and speaks the language, of men whose talents and benevolence have made the very name of their country revered in the East, as the fountain from

which the Almighty pours forth the healing balm which softens the ills to which humanity is doomed.

The venerable Jebrail had also another object in visiting the eternal city, which was to settle a dispute which had arisen between him and a legate from Rome.

The venerable man informed me in his letter, that it was his intention shortly to leave Damascus, for the sea-coast, whence he proposed to start as soon as he could find a ship for Italy. He intended to take Suida and Deir el Kamar in his road, and said he would take advantage of his being in the neighbourhood to Beteddin, to pay me a visit.

Nothing could possibly be more opportune. If I had entertained any doubts and misgivings as to my project, this circumstance would at once have dissipated them all. I sat down and wrote an answer; in which I expressed the lively joy which the anticipation of seeing so old and valued a friend gave me, and communicating to him my design of visiting Europe, besought him to delay his departure for a month or six weeks, until I could

complete my arrangements. I soon received a reply, in which he completely fell into my views, and assured me that nothing could afford him greater satisfaction, than to give me the protection and solace of his society, in the long journey I was about to undertake.

The most painful part of my task still remained, namely, to break my intention to the Amira, whom I tenderly loved, and who had ever treated me with the affection of a sister. She was greatly grieved on learning the determination to which I had come, and used every argument she could think of to divert me from my purpose, but without avail, for my mind was fully made up, and destiny seemed to impel me onward. I often wonder at my hard-heartedness and insensibility, when I reflect on the earnest and affecting entreaties of these dear friends, whom I so rashly and wantonly abandoned. My heart must have been of stone. God knows, I have dearly paid for my indifference, in the privations and hardships which it has been my lot to encounter almost ever since I left that kind home, where not a day passed that I did not receive fresh proofs of affection and esteem, and every face I met was radiant with friendship and love.

At length the time fixed for my departure approached, and the destined companion of my adventurous journey arrived at Beteddin, where he was entertained by the Emir Beschir for several days in a princely manner. Jebrail Khan was a man of business, and was of great assistance to me in completing my arrangements. By his assistance I converted all the Turkish money I had by me—(no small sum, for during the time I had been at Beteddin I had amassed a handsome fortune, partly by means of a regular salary which the Emir granted me as lady of honour to the Amira, and partly from presents made to me by the Emir, the Amira, and the different members of his family on my birthday,)—into gold and silver ingots, in which form, he said, they would be more available in Europe. Besides gold and silver I took with me jewels and trinkets of considerable value, such as diamonds and pearls, rings, necklaces, &c.; so that my property on quitting Beteddin must have amounted to little short, as well as I can remember, of eight thousand ghazi, a coin varying in value from fifteen to twenty shillings English money, according to the will of the Sultan.

Everything being in readiness for the journey, I

bade adieu to the Princess, the Amira Amin, and all my female friends, with mutual tears of regret. I then sought an audience of the Prince, and told him the hour had at length come when my destiny bade me force myself from his hospitable roof. The venerable Emir was moved, and after gently chiding me for my obstinacy, invoked blessings on my head, saying, as I kissed his hand at parting, "May God protect thee against all perils of land and sea, and may'st thou, under his protection, reach the land of the West in peace and safety! May his mercy and grace be showered upon thy head! May his holy will be fulfilled in thee, to the glory of his name! Remember, that in quitting the Lebanon, thou leavest behind a firm friend and protector; and should it please God that the climate or waters of the West quarrel with thy health, do not hesitate at once to return to Beteddin, which shall ever be to thee as the house of thy kindred. Be assured that thou wilt always find here the same friendship and esteem which thou now leavest behind. May God be thy guide!"

I have no words to express the tumult of feelings

which arose in my breast when my noble protector had concluded his benediction; but fervently kissing his august hand, which I bathed with the warm tears of gratitude, I hastened to my room, where I remained sobbing, agitated by a tumult of conflicting emotions, for some time, before I could summon sufficient resolution to depart. I had not felt such acute anguish of mind since the day when I lost father and kindred by the hand of the ruthless oppressor, and saw myself a lone outcast on the wide world. But though deeply impressed by the pain of parting from such sincere friends, I had some consolation in reflecting that I was about to undertake a holy pilgrimage, to gratify the long-cherished wishes of my heart, with the firm assurance that come what might, I had a warm, kind-hearted, generous, and, above all, powerful protector, whose door was ever open to receive me.

Alas! the instability of all earthly things! those once hospitable doors are now closed against the noble and magnanimous Prince who so kindly offered me his protection. Could the Prophet Jeremiah again visit the earth, how would the voice

of his lamentation be heard at the woes which have befallen the daughter of Sion! What floods of bitter tears would he shed at beholding the wrongs and humiliations heaped on her head. The Assyrian is no more. Where is haughty Babylon, with her hundred gates of brass? and where her proud king, that scourge in the hand of the Lord for the chastisement of his rebellious people? They are gone, and their graves are forgotten; but they have found successors as terrible, in the rulers whose yoke now presses sore on the necks of God's people, and presses still more heavily since their civilized brethren of Europe have interfered with their desolating policy.

How would the Prophet weep, and not alone, to see that virtuous Prince, the main stay of Christianity in the land of its birth, a wretched outcast from the home of his fathers, and the scene of his virtues, his eyes would be as two fountains of tears; he would again exclaim—"Juda hath removed her dwelling-place, because of her affliction and the greatness of her bondage; she hath dwelt among the nations, and she hath found no rest; all her persecutors have taken her in the midst of

straits; the ways of Sion mourn, because there are none that come to the solemn feast; all her gates are broken down; her priests sigh; her virgins are in affliction; and she is oppressed with bitterness; her adversaries are become her lords; her enemies are enriched, because the Lord hath spoken against her for the multitude of her iniquities; her children are led into captivity before the face of the oppressor. And from the daughter of Sion all her beauty is departed! her *princes are become like rams, that find no pastures,* and they are gone away without strength before the face of the pursuer." Such has truly been the cruel fate of a prince, whose great aim throughout his long life has ever been to fertilize the land over which he held sway, with the waters of Christianity, and make it once more the abiding place of knowledge, science, order, and virtue.

And what a lesson does it afford to those who stood calmly by, and saw him violently removed from the sphere of his usefulness; to see this venerable, pure, and noble-minded man enduring his sad reverse with the same equanimity as he supported his prosperity; to see him now, as then,

generously sharing the miserable remnant of his former wealth with those faithful followers who have remained with him in the dark days of adversity, as he did in the full tide of fortune and power. Such a man is truly a hero, for he is superior to fortune, whose rude shocks have failed to change, in the smallest degree, the serenity, or impair the constancy, energy, and resignation, of his noble soul. He may truly say with Job—"The ear that heard me, blessed me; and the eye that saw me, gave witness to me; because I had delivered the poor man that cried out, and the fatherless, that had no helper. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me; and I comforted the heart of the widow. I broke the jaws of the wicked man, and out of his teeth I took away the prey. The stranger did not stay without; my door was open to the traveller." This he might have truly said without boasting; but his implicit reliance on God's mercy might make him prefer exclaiming with the same inspired writer—"In very deed God will not condemn without cause; neither will the Almighty pervert judgment." And with the prophet Jeremias—"The Lord is my portion, said my

soul, therefore will I wait for him. The Lord is good to them that hope in him, to the soul that seeketh him. It is good to wait with silence for the salvation of God. * * * For the Lord will not cast off for ever; for if he hath cast off, he will also have mercy, according to the multitude of his mercies. For he hath not willingly afflicted, nor cast off the children of men. Who is he that hath commanded a thing to be done when the Lord commandeth it not?"

Taking a tender leave of my kind protector and his amiable family, I quitted Beteddin in company with the Khan Jebrail, and went to Beyroot, where we found a merchant vessel waiting our arrival, according to arrangement. We were soon on board, where we were received with great attention by the captain, a Genoese by birth; the anchor was weighed, and we set sail for the land of the West.

It was towards the latter end of September, in the year 1832, that I bade adieu to the East,—perhaps for ever. For the first half hour I remained plunged in grief; for now that the bustle and hurry of preparation were over, and I was left

to my own reflections, I thought of the dear friends I had abandoned, and wept bitterly. It was not long, however, before my mental anguish was hushed for a while by severe physical suffering; for the weather was so tempestuous, that I had not been half an hour on board before I fell sea-sick, and continued in this state the whole way to Cyprus, during which time I was almost in a state of unconsciousness from exhaustion, created by the violent reaching by which I was incessantly attacked. I eat nothing, and drank nothing; and I verily believe, had we not providentially put into Cyprus, that I should have died.

Here we remained twenty days, which we spent in rambling about the island, at the end of which time, I was quite recovered from my illness, and eager to prosecute my journey. Before embarking, I bought and had put on board, in order to make presents of it in Europe, several casks of Cyprus wine, both of the sweet red and dry white kind. Besides these, I had on board four of the finest sheep I could procure from the Druses, of the large tailed sort, such as I have before described, as a present to his holiness the Pope, and a small

case, containing some of the true mau-el-lamma, which had been sent to me from Diarbekir.

The weather continued as stormy as ever when we quitted Cyprus; the wind was adverse, and the waves ran mountains high. I was soon in as miserable a plight as before I reached Cyprus, being utterly unable to quit my berth. Fortunately, I had a cabin entirely to myself, or my situation would have been intolerable.

When we had been some days at sea, one of the Druse sheep, a fat unwieldy ewe, had so gorged herself with biscuit, being at the same time unable to shift her position on the deck for a moment, owing to the boisterous weather, sickened and died. The captain ordered her to be immediately cast overboard. Some days afterwards, another shared the same fate, and the captain again directed that the carcase should be thrown into the sea. The sailors, however, unwilling to lose a sheep in such good condition, having been for many days confined to salt provisions, resisted this order, and wished the sheep to be divided amongst the crew. The captain refused, the crew persisted, and a quarrel was the consequence.

I was below in my cabin, lying on my bed, sick and wretched, when, on a sudden, I heard the sound of many voices on the deck, evidently in anger. The noise went on increasing, till it almost drowned the roar of the element. At length, I heard a stamping of feet, and other sounds betokening a deadly struggle, accompanied by loud curses and cries of pain. I could bear it no longer. Ill as I was, I staggered up the ladder on to the deck, and there beheld a sight which chilled me with horror. The deck was sprinkled with blood. The captain, and those who took his part, were engaged in a fierce contest with that part of the crew who had determined to have the carcase of the dead sheep. Knives were brandished on every side, and many were bleeding copiously from fearful gashes inflicted on them by their enraged shipmates.

Calling on them, in God's name, to cease their inhuman strife, I endeavoured, as well as I could,—for I had at this time some difficulty in making myself understood in their language,—to learn the cause of the quarrel. On ascertaining that the carcase of my sheep had given rise to all this bloodshed, I entreated them, for the love of

Heaven, to take one of those which remained alive to divide among them, and to throw the dead one overboard, in obedience to the captain's orders. This middle course seemed to satisfy both sides, the struggle soon ceased, and I retired to my cabin, rejoicing that I had intervened so opportunely, and, by sacrificing the life of one of my sheep, saved, in all probability, those of many of my fellow-creatures.

Shortly after this occurrence, the weather abated, the sea became calm, and the sky bright and clear. The consequence of which was, that my health improved apace, and I was soon able to enjoy the fresh air on the deck.

What sight is more glorious than the sun sinking beneath the wave, making the broad face of the sea one vast expanse of liquid fire? or to see the same orb, ushered in by the light fresh breeze of the dawn, just peeping above the horizon in the East, and tinging each swelling crest of the countless waves with gold? Both these sights I enjoyed nearly every day, while the weather continued fine, and the wind calm. During that interval, I spent the greater part of my time on deck, sometimes leaning over the tafferel, and gazing on the gently-

swelling billows as they swept by our bark, and sometimes watching the different groups on the deck; here a youth reading, and there a sailor sitting on the deck and mending a sail, with a needle large enough for the blade of a stiletto, and humming to himself a cheerful air. All seemed happy and contented; every one appeared at leisure to amuse himself as he listed, for the vessel sped on in her course, requiring, as it seemed, no guiding hand; even the countenance of the helmsman no longer wore its customany look of care and anxiety, but betokened a current of agreeable reflections passing in his mind.

Every evening when the sun had almost disappeared beneath the western wave, the captain summoned the crew to vespers; when he who could read best, and had the best voice, took the Prayer Book and sang the Ave Maris Stella, and repeated the Litany of the Blessed Virgin, in which he was followed by the rest.

I always joined with sincere fervour in these vespers, which produced in my mind feelings of deep devotion, not unmingled with awe and dread. How terrible is the wrath of the Lord

on the wild and boundless wave! and who, that closes the eye on the wilderness of waters, knows that he shall see the morrow's sun? The Arab truly says, that "He who fears not the ocean fears not God."

It being the winter season, the calm weather was but of short duration. The wind soon rose again, adverse and violent, carrying us far out of our course, and destroying all our comfort. At last it increased to a storm; the waves again ran mountains high, scattering showers of foam and spray over the deck. The sun was no longer seen, either at his rising or setting; and the sky became one dull grey mass covered with huge dark portentous-looking clouds. For two days and a night the storm had continued unabated, and the crew were almost worn out with watching and unceasing toil, for they had to a man worked almost without intermission, ever since the commencement of the gale.

On the evening of the second day it increased to a perfect hurricane; every stitch of canvass was taken in, and the ship rolled and pitched to and fro, like a log, on the boiling waves. As night

approached, the dull leaden colour of the sky was changed into perfect darkness, the wind howled, now resembling the groans and shrieks of distress, now the cry of the affrighted camel, and now the roar of a thousand wild beasts thirsting for prey. At intervals the interchange of instructions among the crew was heard, conveyed in a few short words, and the firm voice of the captain giving his orders, betokening calmness and resolution, bringing consolation to the timid, and courage to the wavering.

The night wore on, the wind increased, torrents of rain, mingled with hail, began to fall, and the masts bent like slender reeds before the fury of the blast. It seemed impossible that the ship could outlive the tempest. The darkness of the night added the terrors of uncertainty to the horrors which enveloped us on every side. At intervals, vivid flashes of lightning disclosed the dread scene to the eyes of the affrighted crew, in all its appalling colours, while terrific peals of thunder drowned the shouts and cries of the affrighted sailors, whose voices now showed the fearful forebodings which filled their breasts. All was despair, and the captain at length pronounced the danger imminent.

The pious Jebrail assembled his young men around him, and kneeling on the cabin floor, with a countenance full of calm resignation to the will of Providence, put up a fervent prayer to the throne of Divine grace, beseeching the Almighty in his mercy, in the name of him whose voice hushed the fury of the waves when his disciples were nigh to perish, to interpose with his all powerful arm, in which alone they could hope for escape from instant destruction.

My courage never deserted me in great emergencies: perhaps few women were ever less beset by the weakness of fear. I had known danger; I had, not once, but many times and often, seen blood flow in ferocious encounters, and men fall beside me, gasping in the agony of death, with whom I had, not an hour before, been engaged in cheerful conversation; I had seen those dearest to me cut off by the most cruel tortures, and my own life had been in imminent peril on many occasions from violence and accidents; but my heart never grew so white with terror as on that fearful night. There was nothing to divert the mind from the impending danger; to avert which all human means appeared utterly unavailing.

Hearing the confusion and cries of terror on deck, I could restrain myself no longer, but made my way up the ladder as well as I could, and there beheld the crew in despair clinging to ropes or anything within their reach, abandoning all exertion for their safety, and sunk in utter and complete despair, some offering fervent prayers to Heaven, and others uttering piercing cries of terror, answered only by the roar of the thunder and the crash of the elements.

I retreated to my cabin breathless with terror, and joined my prayers with those of the devout Jebrail and his pupils, and prepared to die.

In this mood I retired to my bed, which I now regarded as my grave from which I should arise no more in this world, and delivered myself up to prayer. At first, the thoughts of those dear friends whom I had adandoned never to behold again rushed upon my mind, and I shed a flood of tears —tears of bitter regret and remorse. At length, my mind became more composed; for I thought, "Of what importance is it whether my bones rest beneath the ground, or are scattered on the bottom of the boundless deep? Shall not the All-seeing

eye discover them in the day of judgment? God's will be done!"

Full of hope in the goodness of the Almighty, resigning myself humbly to his will, with crossed arms and tranquil mind I awaited the flight of my soul into eternity.

CHAPTER X.

A Nautical Joke—Arrival at Leghorn—Quarantine—A Disappointment—Reminiscences and Reflections—Persecutions and Sufferings—Curious Incident—Arrival at Rome—Presentation to the Pope—A Misfortune—Departure from Italy.

It was late on the following morning when I awoke. The cabin was full of light, brilliant, cheering, and tranquil. The ship no longer started, groaned, writhed, and plunged, like a noble horse who has received his death wound. But for a gentle undulating motion, I might have been beguiled into the notion that I was safe in bed on land, and no more at the mercy of the angry billows. I could hardly believe my senses. I rubbed my eyes and looked around me. All was at peace. Not a sound was to be heard save the steady and unagitated tread of some seaman

pacing the deck above me. The horrors of the past night seemed like the fearful fiction of a distempered dream. My first act was to return fervent thanks to God for my preservation; my next to dress myself and hasten with all speed to join the companions in my danger, that we might pour forth our united gratitude to the Throne of Mercy, for our miraculous escape from destruction. How just is the saying of the wise Sindabad El Bahri El Baghdadi! "Suffer Destiny to roll on in her course, and sleep with a mind at ease; for between sleeping and waking the current of events is often completely reversed."

The first person I encountered was the captain, "Praised be God," he said, "the storm is over, and a fair wind has sprung up."

I then went on deck. The sky was without a cloud, and the sun shining brilliantly. The deck was crowded with the passengers and crew, and nothing was heard but mutual congratulations on the providential escape we had just had from the jaws of death.

We devoted the whole of that day to festivity and rejoicing. A great many fowls were taken

out of the hencoop, killed and eaten, and no small quantity of wine was drunk, to celebrate our deliverance. For my own part, I felt like one risen from the dead.

The fine weather, however, did not continue long. The sky, after a clear day or two, again threatened storms, which did not by any means disappoint our anticipations, soon putting an end to our rejoicing, and confining us below. These, however, were mere trifles, and did not again, during the rest of the voyage, assume a dangerous character. Insignificant, however, as they were, they had the effect of renewing all my nausea, and depriving me of all appetite, for the remaining part of the journey.

Never was I so weary of anything in my whole life, as of this voyage! My longing for the sight of land was like the longing of the babe for its mother's breast. The captain, who was perfectly aware of this feeling, (for I had promised a handsome present to whoever should first show me the land), and was, moreover, a bit of a wag, one morning came in a great bustle to the door of my cabin, and said, "Come up, Signora, and I will show

you part of the Montenero." I made all haste on to the deck, and looked ahead, but no rock, or anything indicating the neighbourhood of land could be seen, though I strained my eyes to the utmost. "Where is this rock you promised to show me?" said I, addressing the captain, who stood carelessly leaning against the tafferel.

"Come this way, Signora," he said, "and I will show you;" and leading the way to the caboose, he brought forth a piece of stone, which he said had been chipped off from the Montenero. At another time, I might have enjoyed the hoax; but I was not in the mood for laughing, being worn with sickness, and much wasted by long abstinence. I, therefore, withdrew again to my cabin, not a little chagrined at my disappointment.

At length, after beating about for three months, during which, we were sometimes driven back many miles in one day by contrary winds, we arrived at Leghorn, and cast anchor. We were forthwith landed at the lazaretto, where we were condemned to remain for forty days, under strict surveillance, each passenger having a separate room, from which he or she was not permitted to

emerge, except at a certain time of the day, when all were allowed to walk for a short time on the tongue of land, on which the lazaretto stands, guarded and watched by sentinels. So strictly were the regulations enforced, that, if a person who had performed thirty-nine days' quarantine, and therefore wanted but a day of his liberation, was known so much as to touch any other individual more recently arrived from suspected countries, he was not suffered to quit the lazaretto, until the newly arrived traveller had completed his full term. If, therefore, he should, after remaining thirty-nine days in confinement, be so unlucky as to come in contact with another, arrived only the day before, the length of his quarantine would be seventy-eight days!

What a crowd of new objects presented themselves to my view, as our vessel lay at anchor, before we were carried off to the lazaretto! What a turmoil and bustle, so different from what I had ever beheld in any eastern city! The quays thronged with people in earnest conversation, so lively and animated; they seemed to have not a single care on their minds. How different from

the grave and silent Turk! And yet how dull and sober their attire! They seemed all in mourning. What a contrast to the vivacity of their gait and gestures! Here were no flowing benishes, no turbans of dazzling white,—no bright-red tarboushes, —no proud Agas stalking by with haughty gait, and glittering in all the splendour of their jewel-hilted hanjars, and gold bespangled sadriehs; and yet, how gay and animated the scene! Here every man seemed to look on his neighbour as a brother, —all appeared on terms of perfect equality. The women, too, young, fair and gay, all without veils, displaying their charms to each profane passer-by, without fear or shame! I must confess, this latter circumstance rather shocked me at first; I thought it showed great want of feminine modesty and decorum. And yet, on reflection, thought I, what a happy land must this be, where a female can walk abroad as free as one of the other sex—where, notwithstanding this freedom, morality, piety and virtue, shine conspicuously in all classes! The houses, too, how lofty and imposing, with large windows on every story, in great numbers, showing that their inhabitants have nothing which they

care to conceal, even in the privacy of their own dwellings. I wondered which part of the house was set apart for the females. "Happy country!" I exclaimed—"this is indeed the land of promise. What dangers would I not have braved to purchase the privilege of setting foot on your favoured shores!"

I longed to mix in the happy throng which lined the quays; but I knew a long interval must elapse before I could be permitted to enjoy this pleasure. We were carried to the lazaretto, where, as I have said, we had each an appartment assigned to us, in which we were doomed to linger out the dreary term of our quarantine.

I was so shattered by the dreadful sickness to which I had been a martyr during almost the entire voyage, that I was extremely ill throughout the whole period of my confinement in the lazaretto; and when at length we were set at liberty, I was carried to a locanda in Leghorn, where I took to my bed, and remained there for three months in a most debilitated condition.

On landing my various effects from the vessel, it was discovered that the wine casks had all been

nearly emptied of their contents by the sailors; who had cunningly contrived to insert a reed into each hogshead, through the partition which divided my cabin from the others; so, at least, I imagine, since I never detected any of them in the act. Thus my Cyprus wine, which I had fondly hoped would prove so acceptable a present to those in Europe to whom I had letters of recommendation, was of no value whatever. This, however, was a loss not to be repaired; and I therefore submitted to it with perfect resignation.

Jebrail, whose business at Rome was urgent, was naturally most anxious to proceed thither without delay; but seeing my forlorn and helpless condition, he kindly remained with me at Leghorn two months; at the end of which time, seeing no prospect of my being able to accompany him, at least for a considerable time, he departed with his pupils; urging me to follow him as soon as my health would permit. My misfortunes and calamities in Europe date from the period when this excellent man was compelled, by inevitable necessity, to leave me to the care of strangers, as it seemed as though, from that moment, Destiny had

laid its heavy hand on us both; for he had no sooner accomplished the object of his journey, and returned to his native country, than he became the victim of unceasing persecution, the prey of ruinous exactions, and persevering tyranny. His schemes were all thwarted by the jealous interference of the Turkish authorities, his property confiscated, and he himself put to an ignominious death.

God only knows to what extent he might have succeeded, had he lived to realise the cherished object of his whole existence, the regeneration of his country; for he had learning, virtue, courage, resolution, and wealth sufficient to second his noble, generous, and high minded efforts in the pious cause to which he had devoted himself. It has pleased Providence to remove him from this world, before he had time to carry his schemes to their development. He suffered martyrdom in defence of all that is great and good in human nature, and he has left behind a name which will be honoured and revered, as long as one spark of virtue glimmers on the face of the earth.

From this period, my life has been one constant succession of care, vexation, and bitter disappointment.

My lot has been an unfortunate one; for, like the traveller in the Scripture, I have fallen among thieves. Far be it from me to deny that good Samaritans are to be found in Europe; I know the fact to be otherwise, and have heard of some noble instances which might well be compared to the example quoted by Our Saviour. Instances of the noblest generosity, and the most exalted philantrophy, I have known in the conduct of Europeans in the East. One of these which occurs to my mind, reflects such high honour on the eminent personage who was the principal actor in it, and has had so great a share in raising the character of the nation to which he belonged, to its present high standing in the East, that I cannot refrain from relating it. The distinguished individual, who was British Consul at Bagdad twenty years since, Mr. Rich, a friend of my relation the Patriarch Austinus, from whom I heard the circumstance, and who, by his conciliatory, and,

at the same time, firm and dignified conduct in the discharge of his high functions, had acquired so great an influence with the Pasha of that district, that his power there almost equalled that of the governor himself, interposed on one occasion to save the life of a Christian who had been condemned to death. His intercession succeeded, and the Christian was restored to his friends, whose gratitude to his preserver knew no bounds.

Shortly after this occurrence, a messenger arrived one day at the consulate, carrying on his head a syneiah, one of the large trays on which dinner is usually served in the East, heavily laden, and covered with a rich cloth fringed with gold, addressed to the British consul.

The consul at first supposed it to be a present of fruit, but on taking off the cloth, and discovering that the tray was laden with costly presents of pearls, jewels, Persian shawls, and other articles of high value, in testimony of the gratitude felt by the family of him whom he had just rescued from impending death, he immediately sent back the treasure, declaring that he would on no account

accept a reward for the performance of an act of common humanity. Many similar acts might be cited in the career of this truly excellent man, who was cut off in the prime of life, falling a sacrifice at last to the cause of humanity and christian charity; an irreparable loss to his country, and to those on whose behalf his merciful hand had so often interposed to save them from spoliation and torture.

The events of my life, during the twelve years I have been in Europe, would alone fill volumes; but the length to which these memoirs have already extended, warns me that I have already trespassed too long on the patience of the reader; who, I cannot doubt, must, before this, be heartily tired of a recital of occurrences and misfortunes, interesting only to the humble individual who now relates them. Besides these considerations, a series of severe attacks of tic douloureux in my eyes and head almost unnerve me from making the attempt at the present moment. I do not, however, despair of giving to the world a detailed account of the adventures and persecutions which have befallen

me during my exile of twelve years in Italy, France, and England; in which period, circumstances have brought me in contact with persons of considerable note in the different states of Europe, and which have been marked by events of considerable interest. In the present work, I shall confine myself to as brief a recapitulation as possible of my movements from my arrival at Leghorn, in the year 1832, to the present time.

It was then that I may be said to have really entered the world. Up to that period, I had lived as much in ignorance of its real features, as though I had dwelt in a lonely hermitage all my days. My visions of the excellence of human nature were most beatific. I fondly hoped—nay, I felt fully persuaded—that the world, especially the more civilised portions of it, abounded, with pure philantrophy, dignified, enlightened virtue, and true Christian piety. Little did I then suspect the designing policy in the smallest, as well as in the most important transactions of life, in the most trivial, as well as in the most momentous relations between man and man, which mark, in every grade, the everchanging current of common

intercourse. This to me had been a sealed book, a state of things unknown, unsuspected, undreamed of. The politics which I had studied were the pure and simple, and divine precepts of duty towards my God, and love towards my neighbour; my yea was yea, and my nay, nay. Alas! how rudely has experience torn from my eyes the veil of credulity and happy ignorance, and disclosed to my aching sight the world in its true colours, filled with craftiness, self-seeking, and hypocrisy, insomuch that the seeker after virtue is employed in almost as hopeless an enterprise as the mariner who searches after his lost para in the Straits of Bab el Mandel. I have tried the world, and now long with impatient yearning to quit its busy turmoil and strife, for peace and solitude. In the fearful desolation and awful solitude of Mount Sinai, will I eke out the remnant of my days. There, with no other companions around me than the wild beasts of the desert and forest, far from the haunts of man will I write, in solitude and seclusion, the tragic events of that part of my life when my lot was cast in the midst of policy and pleasure, as I now recount the narrative of my

early days before I had heedlessly launched into the troubled sea of human passion, and human intrigues; I will then point out the false piety of those who make the outward appearance of devotion a means of attaining or working out their ends of wickedness and perfidy.

Sometime after the departure of Jebrail Khan for Rome, I had occasion for money to pay the expense of my board and lodging during my long illness.

I had brought a letter of introduction to a man of business at Leghorn, who had been recommended to me as a person perfectly trustworthy, and one who might be of great use to me in arranging my money matters. Wishing to convert some of the silver ingots which I had brought from the East, into the money of the country, I sent for this man, who came and received from me a number of bars to convert into cash. He brought me the money, the small amount of which surprised me not a little; but, on my expressing my astonishment that the exchange had been so ruinously against me, he assured me that he had

brought me the full value, and that it would be impossible to obtain more; stating that as he had sent the bars to Florence, in order to procure the very best price for them. I was credulous, and never suspected the man's honour and probity for a moment, and was therefore grossly cheated; as I found, on comparing the amount produced with the sum which I had paid, and I was afterwards told that he had not given me more than one-tenth part of what my ingots were worth.

In six months time I was sufficiently recovered to continue my journey. I therefore joined a respectable party who were going to Rome, by way of Civita Vecchia. On starting from the latter city for Rome, an amusing incident occurred. The passengers by the diligence were a Roman gentleman of wealth and distinction, a poor Capuchin friar, myself, and another individual. The rich man carried with him some gold trinkets of great value, which he had brought from I know not where, and was about to present as an agreeable surprise to his wife, who awaited his arrival in Rome. This precious burden gave him great

uneasiness, from the apprehension of the heavy duty which he feared he would have to pay upon it on entering the holy city, and he was racking his brain to contrive a scheme by which he might baffle the vigilance of the Roman *douaniers*, and pass his wife's trinkets duty free.

At length, he hit upon an expedient, and addressing himself to the capuchin, earnestly besought the simple friar to oblige him by taking the treasure under his capacious tunic, where he knew it would be safe, inasmuch as it was not the practice to search friars, who seldom carry any thing about them but their spiritual treasures, concerning which, custom-house officers are not solicitous. The friar, who appeared to be a good-natured man enough, consented to do what he could to pass the jewellery, and took it under his tunic.

On reaching the Custom-House, we were all asked in turn whether we had anything to declare. The stranger had nothing, I had nothing, and our wealthy fellow-traveller said he had nothing. When it came to the friar's turn, he said, shaking his

tunic, "Oh, yes, I have here jewelry and gold articles, of great value, which are intended as a present *per la* signora." The officers, who looked upon the Capuchin as a wag, laughed heartily at the idea of a mendicant friar carrying about him such valuables, and allowed us all to pass without further delay.

When we had got fairly out of the reach of the Custom-House officers, the owner of the jewelry remonstrated with the friar on his want of good faith; saying, that but for a lucky accident, he might have suffered the loss of the whole, through his foolish candour. "Had you told me," said he, "that you meant to betray me to the Customs, I would have taken the risk myself."

The Capuchin replied, "I am at a loss to see in what respect you have suffered, or by what right you make this charge against me; for here is your wife's present duty free," handing him the packet, "and I have not stained my conscience with a lie."

I went first to an hotel in the Piazza di Spagna, whence I despatched the letters of recommendation

which I had brought for the Cardinal Odescalchi, the Pope's Vicar-General, the Cardinal Prefét of Propaganda, the Cardinal Weld, and many other dignitaries of the church; from many of whom, especially the two first named eminent individuals, I received numerous and constant proofs of friendship during my four years residence in Rome.

As it is not my intention, in the present work, to go into the details of this period of my life, I shall content myself with briefly stating, that, shortly after my arrival in the Eternal City, I was presented to His Holiness, who received me in the most gracious manner, and condoled with me on the heavy calamities which had befallen my family, with the details of which His Holiness was well acquainted.

My family having been long known to him, he directed his Vicar-General to place me in the best convent, where I remained for some length of time. Finding my health decline, and being recommended to change my residence, His Holiness gave me permission to enter another. But having failed

to derive any advantage, and still becoming weaker and weaker, suffering likewise severely from intense pains in the head, I was advised at length to relinquish the idea of remaining.

During my stay in Rome, I was again robbed. My former loss at Leghorn was a mere trifle; but this second misfortune almost reduced me to beggary; for a box, containing nearly all that I possessed in the world, was broken open one day, whilst I was out on a visit to a Roman lady of rank, and rifled of all its contents, consisting of the most costly pearls and jewels, inherited from my family, as also money to a considerable amount. On discovering my loss, I was driven to despair; for it seemed as though my evil destiny was never to leave me. I went immediately, almost broken hearted, to seek advice from my friends, who recommended me to lose no time in applying to the police.

This I forthwith did, and the matter was at once strictly investigated by the proper officers. Suspicion fell upon a certain individual, who had absconded immediately after I had discovered my

loss; but he was never found, notwithstanding the utmost exertions were made by the police to ascertain the place of his flight. In all probability, he had planned his scheme for some time previously, and had crossed the frontier immediately after committing the robbery.

This circumstance, combined with embarrassments of which I became the victim, from speaking my mind on some occasion with perhaps an imprudent frankness,—a frankness, however, natural to me, and to be found, more or less, in all who have been born and bred in the country of my birth, and my constantly declining health, determined me, at the end of a residence of four years, to quit Rome.

I now longed earnestly to return to my beloved friends in the Lebanon, and would have gone at once to Leghorn to seek a ship for that purpose, had not the state of my health and my dread of the sea, which had left on my mind a picture of terrors not to be effaced, effectually checked my yearnings. It seemed to me like casting myself headlong in the way of death. To stay in

Rome, however, was impossible, and I therefore, acting upon medical advice, and with the full approbation of His Holiness, and my principal friends at Rome, determined to try the air of France.

CHAPTER XI.

Arrival at Paris—Introduced to Numerous Distinguished Persons—Downfall of the Prince of the Lebanon—Its Results on the Author—Conduct of the Emir Beschir—History of His Downfall — His Present Melancholy Condition—The Earl of Munster—M. Guizot—Disappointed Expectations—Arrival in England—Royal and Noble Patronage—Conclusion.

In the spring of the year 1837, I quitted Rome, and travelled by easy stages to Paris, accompanied by the Marquis de Montblanc, whom I had known at Rome, staying a few days at many places of note on the road, such as Marseills, Lyons, Dijon, and other places.

My travelling companion, who had a great reputation for piety and Christian virtues, introduced me to the Archbishop of Paris, and to the chiefs of many of the convents. Besides which, the letters of recommendation which I had brought with me, soon procured me access to the

most eminent personages in the French capital, at the hands of many of whom I received signal services, and I should be guilty of ingratitude if I omitted to acknowledge, with heartfelt thankfulness, the kindness and protection extended to me by that great, good, and wise man, who now stands highest in the councils of the enlightened sovereign, who now rules the destinies of the French nation. Like the two eminent prelates to whom I had the honour of being recommended at Rome, he has ever been to me a firm and steadfast friend. Besides this, I had the honour of being presented to the Queen, who received me very graciously, and manifested a deep interest in my welfare.

I remained in Paris from 1837 till the year 1841, during which interval I had the pleasure of associating with all that is eminent in that capital. At length, the dreadful news arrived that my noble and generous protector, the great Prince of the Lebanon, whose bounty was now my sole dependance (for he had regularly sent me a handsome remittance ever since my sojourn in Europe), had been driven from his throne and country, and was

now little better than a wretched outcast like myself.

The news came upon me like a thunderbolt, when I learned that the fall of this pious and just Christian Prince,—the shield of Christianity in the East—the gates of whose palace have ever been open to Europeans, — was in no slight degree attributable to the agency of a nation, whose sons he had ever cherished above the sons of all other western nations, my grief knew no bounds. May the Lord grant that regard for the higher considerations of justice, and for the sacred cause of Christianity, may at length triumph over the petty, narrow, immoral, and unchristian motives of state policy in the councils of that nation, whose name was once associated with morality and virtue, and whose just rule made happy myriads of human beings, from the rising to the setting sun, and that they will not allow a Prince who placed himself and his interest with full confidence in their hands, to remain a homeless wanderer,—an hapless exile from a people who thirst for the return of his peaceful rule, as the parched traveller of the deserts thirsts for the cooling spring.

For what crime is the unfortunate Emir now excluded from his ancient throne, and condemned, in the winter of his days, to dreary banishment from the land of his fathers? Is it for a ready, unflinching, unhesitating obedience to the commands of his sovereign, and a blind reliance on the plighted faith of that sovereign's all-powerful European allies? If oppression, poverty, and exile be the fitting rewards for justice, mercy, loyalty, and virtue, then is the Emir's doom just; but, as long as gratitude is due to the benefactor of his race,—as long as unswerving allegiance merits the confidence of the mighty of the earth, and virtue deserves honour,—so long will the disastrous fate of the Prince of the Lebanon be a foul stain on the character of the power to whose authority he bowed, and a crying shame on the good faith of European nations.

I am little skilled in the intricate mazes of diplomacy and state policy; but I have that confidence in the strength of a righteous cause, and that reliance on the good faith and sense of justice of at least one of the powers implicated in these transactions, which gives me the cheering

assurance that, although reparation may be delayed from political considerations beyond the sphere of my comprehension, still that it will not ultimately be withheld, and that the illustrious and unfortunate Prince will yet, ere the sun finally sets on his long and useful career, be once more restored to his faithful subjects, and that the fierce demon of discord, who now stalks with bloody footsteps through the beautiful valleys of the holy mountain, may be laid for ever in the dust.

The history of the warlike operations on the Syrian coast, undertaken in 1840 by the Sultan, in conjunction with his European allies, for the subjugation of his rebellious vassal, the Pasha of Egypt, is familiar to all.

The share which the Emir Beschir had in those momentous operations may be stated as follows. The narrative may be implicitly relied on.

In 1840, four British vessels, destined to co-operate with those of the Sublime Porte, in the reduction of the rebellious cities on the Syrian coast, who refused allegiance to their rightful sovereign, arrived in the roads of Beyroot. The

officer in command forthwith sent a letter to the Emir Beschir, as well as to the commander of the Egyptian troops, encamped in the neighbourhood, summoning them to render instant obedience to the commands of the Sultan.

Soliman Pasha, who commanded the force of Mehemet Ali, posted around Beyroot, on learning that part of the British squadron had cast anchor off the coast, took every precaution to prevent any communication between the vessels and the native princes, and gave the strictest orders to his lieutenants to intercept all letters whatever, and arrest all persons suspected of bearing dispatches from persons on shore to the British forces lying off Beyroot. The consequence of these orders necessarily was, that the Emir Beschir was for a long time utterly unable to convey an answer to the summons which the officer commanding the naval force had found means to place in his hands. He contrived, however, at length to send a reply by his own physician, whom he dispatched to Beyroot, under the pretext of going to visit a relation of his who lay sick in that town. By this stratagem, the physician, who travelled day and

night without stopping, by unfrequented paths, over steep and rugged mountains, succeeded in transmitting to the commander of the British force the Prince's letter, in which he declared his perfect willingness to bow in every particular to the mandate of his sovereign, and expressed his willingness to place himself, together with his children, and his children's children, under God, in the hands of the representative of the high and illustrious court of Great Britain, in obedience to the requisition forwarded to him by that officer, alleging, at the same time, the impossibility of declaring himself before the arrival of the Sultan's troops to protect him in his allegiance.

To this the officer in command sent a reply, in which he expressed his entire approval of the Emir's conduct, admitting the full force of the circumstances detailed by him, in justification of the delay, which these circumstances rendered unavoidable, and assured him that it was enough that he had expressed his readiness to obey the Sublime Porte, by placing himself, together with his family, on board the British fleet, as soon

as he should be supported by the presence of the Sultan's troops.

Upon receiving this assurance, the Emir held himself in readiness to redeem his pledge, as soon as the conditions specified should be complied with. More than twenty days passed after the receipt of this last communication. In the mean time, Ibrahim Pasha, having gained intelligence that part of the British squadron had made its appearance off Beyroot, lost no time in concentrating the greater part of the forces belonging to the Pasha of Egypt, his father, which were scattered over the Lebanon, in the neighbourhood of that town; while he himself, at the head of a numerous and powerful detachment, made his appearance before Beteddin, where he straightway established his head quarters. In order to ensure the obedience of the Emir Beschir, he had no sooner established himself at Beteddin, than he sent off nearly every member of the Emir's family to the commanders of various detachments of the Egyptian forces occupying positions in different parts of Syria; amongst other places, some were sent to Ghaza. At this moment arrived the Turkish troops, together with the rest

of the fleet; the troops being commanded by Azza Pasha, on the part of the Sublime Porte, the English ships being under the command of the admiral in chief of the British squadron, Sir Robert Stopford.

On their arrival off Djouni, the British admiral sent an ecclesiastic, of high reputation, called Stephen Habish, nephew of the patriarch of the Lebanon, a man distinguished by his talents and intelligence, to the Emir Beschir, to remind him of his promise to unite with the forces of his sovereign.

To this summons the Emir sent a reply, in which he professed his readiness to fulfil his engagements in every particular, but requested a delay of a few days, that he might devise some scheme for rescuing his children and grandchildren from the hands of Ibrahim Pasha, who had dispersed them over the mountain, and placed them under the control of his lieutenants; and to whom, therefore, such a step on the part of the Emir, as that proposed by the Admiral, if suddenly ventured on, might be fraught with the utmost danger. Time was further necessary to enable him to find some plausible pretext,

in order to get rid of Ibrahim Pasha, who was at that time his guest. As soon as he should have succeeded in accomplishing these two objects, the Emir promised to place himself and his family, and the principal chiefs of the Lebanon, in the hands of the British Admiral. This resolution the same intelligent priest, mentioned above, communicated by the Emir's desire to the chief of the Maronites in the neighbourhood, not far from the position occupied by the troops of the Sublime Porte and their allies, the British, in order that they might be fully apprised of the course which he intended to pursue, namely, to join the allied forces as soon as he should have rid himself of the presence of Ibrahim Pasha.

The commanders of the British and Turkish forces, on receiving the Emir's reply, acquiesed in the necessity of the delay, and tendered their united thanks to the priest for his exertions on their behalf. The Prince at length managed to get rid of Ibrahim Pasha, by alleging pressing business, an excuse which, by the blessing of the Almighty—praised be his name!—succeeded in inducing him to promise that he would withdraw himself, together with

his troops, in two days. Previously to the expiration of this period, however, another priest, named Germanus Safir, arrived at Beteddin, bearing a communication from the general commanding the troops of the Sublime Porte, and the British commander and admiral, for the Emir Beschir, written in English, with an Arabic translation, in which the British admiral, and the commander-in-chief of the Ottoman troops, gave him their solemn assurance, under their hands and seals, that if he would submit to the authority of his sovereign, the Sultan Abdul Majid, his person, his family, his possessions, and his government should be safe; promising him, at the same time, protection and assistance under all circumstances.

The following is a re-translation into English of the Arabic version of the guarantee alluded to, which was given to the Emir Beschir by the British Admiral and the Commander of the Syrian forces.

"The original of the papers sent to His Majesty the Emir Beschir el Shehabi from Admiral Robert Stopford, and from Aza Pasha, general (serasker) of the troops in Syria, and its translation from the

English language into Arabic by their own dragomans. The original is in our possession written on English paper, and its contents are as follows:—

"'We, who have hereunto affixed our names, Robert Stopford, chief admiral of the British Court (Capudan Bashi Dowlat El Inklezear), and commander-in-chief of the British fleet (serasker aamoum el bakhriat el Inklezear), and Mohammed Aza Pasha, commander (serasker) of the forces in Syria, take it upon ourselves, and pledge our solemn oaths to His Majesty the Emir Beschir el Shehabi, on condition that he obeys His Majesty, the Sultan Abdul Majid the Great, that we will guarantee to His Majesty, agreeably to this our writing, to which we have affixed our seals below, the safety of his relations, his friends, and the suite attached to His Majesty. We pledge ourselves to afford him protection and aid under all circumstances, as it is set forth in the august mandate (belumir el sherif), so that he may have nothing to fear, as we have already given our assurance, on yielding obedience, but shall remain in possession of his dignities and his government agreeably to our promise given on that head. Moreover, for his

security and tranquillity, we have given him the paper written in English and sealed with the seal of Great Britain.

" ' Written the 5th day of October, 1840.

(Signed) ROBERT STOPFORD,
Admiral of the British Fleet
(Serasker Bakhriat Aamoumiat el Inklezear.)

MOHAMMED AZA PASHA,
Commander of the Syrian Forces.' "

Two days after the arrival of this communication, Ibrahim Pasha withdrew with his forces to another part of the mountain, at about seven hours' distance from Beteddin. No sooner was the Emir freed from his presence, than he secretly sent instructions, without loss of time, to his children and grandchildren to make their escape, and join him at Saida, where he proposed to assemble the chiefs of the Lebanon, preparatory to delivering themselves up to the combined forces.

Having thus taken all necessary steps for the fulfilment of his engagements, the Emir despatched a letter to the British admiral, acquainting him with the position of affairs, and requesting him to

send a shaktoura (vessel) to Saida, for the purpose of conveying him, with his family and adherents, to the combined squadron. This the Admiral despatched immediately on the receipt of the communication from the Emir Beschir, who with his family and a very small retinue went on board the vessel, which straightway set sail for Beyroot, off which place the fleet lay at anchor.

On arriving off Beyroot, intimation was brought to the Emir that he would not be permitted to land, but that the Admiral would receive him on board his vessel; whereupon the Emir repaired on board, and was there informed by the Admiral that the firman conferring the government over the Lebanon had been given to another, and that this arrangement could not be altered, neither could the Emir be permitted to remain in Syria. He was ordered to repair to Malta, together with his family, until Ibrahim Pasha should evacuate Syria, together with his troops, when he was to be reinstated in his possessions, and replaced in his government. It was then stated that he was going to Malta of his own free will and choice. Reports were likewise sent to all the princes and chiefs of the Lebanon,

announcing that the Emir was going to Malta of his own free will, in obedience to the commands of his sovereign. On receiving this intelligence, they all yielded ready obedience.

A document was then put into his hands, signed by Mohammed Azza Pasha and Admiral Stopford, in which the security of the Emir's houses, lands, villages, silk grounds, and the rest of his property, was solemnly guaranteed. On receiving this he set sail for Saida, to take up the rest of his family, and his children and grandchildren, who had escaped from the hands of Ibrahim's lieutenants. On being joined by his family he proceeded at once to Malta, where he was told he might proceed whithersoever he pleased, with the exception of Syria. He remained there nearly a year, at his own charges, which were materially aggravated by the necessity he was under of supporting the faithful followers who, to the number of a hundred and fifty, had accompanied him, resolved to share his fortunes to the last, and with whom he would have made it a point of honour to share his last crust.

At length a firman arrived from the August Sultan, Abdul Majid, to the Emir Beschir, in

which praises and gratitude were heaped upon him, for the manner in which he had for forty years conducted the government of the Lebanon; and which granted him full liberty to go to any part of the Ottoman territories, with the exception of Syria and the country about Damascus. Some days after the receipt of this firman, the Emir received a communication from the Grand Vizier, urging him to present himself at Constantinople, and assuring him that on appearing in the august presence of his sovereign, the Illustrious Sultan, Abdul Majid, he would obtain the utmost of his desire, and acquainting him at the same time that a palace should be prepared for his reception in that city, in every respect worthy of his rank and dignity, and that he might confidently reckon on being treated with all honour and consideration.

By the same post came a letter from the ambassador, representing the high court of Great Britain at the Sublime Porte, for the governor of Malta, enjoining him to urge on the Emir Bescher the expediency of presenting himself at Constantinople. The Prince having all along paid implicit deference to the advice offered him by the British govern-

ment, and having from the beginning placed himself and his fortunes unhesitatingly in their hands, seeing that its representative warmly seconded the views of the Grand Vizier on the present occasion, at once yielded a ready compliance. Accordingly, taking with him his family, and those faithful adherents who had united their fate with his, he went on board an English frigate, which was placed at his disposal by the British admiral, and set sail for Constantinople.

On reaching that city, instead of a spacious palace befitting his dignity and station, he found prepared for his reception a house incapable of accommodating even the half of his family and attendants, and he was, therefore, compelled to hire other houses for their accommodation, and this without being assisted with a single para to defray the expenses of living. But this was not all. He had not long been established in his new quarters, before an order came from the government, commanding him to quit the house provided for him by the state, and bidding him seek others for the accommodation of himself and retinue.

Since that time, the Emir has continued to

defray the heavy charges incurred by the maintenance of his family and suite, entirely out of his own private fortune, not having received any revenue from the country over which he ruled, for the last three years; at the time he left his palace he expected to return in a very short time, and removed nothing but the most necessary articles, leaving all property of value behind; thus his means have become entirely exhausted, and he has been compelled to sell the Amira's jewels, and even his own hanjar, in order to provide the necessaries of existence for himself, and those who have been his stedfast adherents through good and evil; whilst those who knew him in the days of his prosperity imitate the conduct of the friends of Job.

Such is now, alas! the hapless lot of the once great prince of the Lebanon; the reward of whose ready allegiance to his sovereign hitherto, has been deposition from his government, and banishment from his country; reduction from princely affluence, to a state of needy penury; his houses, together with those of his children, converted into heaps of ruins; his revenues alienated, his lands laid waste, his inheritance given to strangers.

Such is the fate of a prince to whose restoration, after the evacuation of Syria by Ibrahim Pasha, the faith of the British government was solemnly pledged; in full reliance upon which, the Emir still endures the bitter reverses that have befallen him, with serenity and resignation, cheered by the hope of reparation, which he confidently entertains, from the justice of his cause. Let those, then, who rule the destinies of the vast and mighty empire of England, look into their hearts; let them interrogate their consciences, and then say, whether their duty, their glory, nay, their honour, does not compel them to repair this crying injustice to the prince whom England has so cruelly oppressed, and to whom her faith is so solemnly pledged under the hand of her representative.

Who shall dare to call in question their power to see full and ample justice done to the oppressed? Neither will I, for one, permit myself to doubt their hearty and sincere good will to see the measures to which they are pledged, carried into effect. Shall it be said that the Sultan's European allies have no right to interfere in the internal arrangements of the Ottoman empire? Did not those

powers insist on certain conditions, the effect of which was to limit the uncontrolled sway claimed by the Porte over its vassals, in favour of Mehemet Ali, who rose in arms against his sovereign? Can it be, that oppression and injustice are reserved only for the faithful and obedient?

What has been the fate of that daring, and able renegade, Soliman Pasha, I know not; but I rather imagine it will be found to be very different from that of the late ruler of the Lebanon. And yet, was not the same mandate issued to both, on the arrival of the ships in the roads of Beyroot? Were not both, at the same moment, commanded to yield instant obedience to their sovereign?

The sole dependence, the only hope of the fallen Emir is, therefore, in the justice and honour of the court of Great Britain, under whose powerful protection he was compelled to place his fortunes, and those of all who are dearest to him on earth. Justice will be done. Who shall presume to doubt it? But, oh! let it not be delayed, till the grave has closed over the head of the venerable man, to whom it is so urgently due; and, though the stern decrees of state policy, inexorable as his fate, which

have hitherto made him an innocent victim for the crimes of others, may have rendered a temporary delay necessary, let it not be said hereafter, that the prince, whose virtuous government met with the declared approbation of his sovereign's chief minister, and whose only fault was a cheerful and unhesitating submission to that sovereign's mandates, was allowed by the rulers of the most powerful nation of the earth, who had promised him their protection, to die the death of a beggar and an outcast!

The rest of my sad history is soon told. The fall of my kind and noble protector, and the imprisonment of my uncle at Diarbekir, from whom I had received remittances, reduced me to absolute penury, and I had no prospect before my eyes, save that of misery and desolation.

In this desperate extremity, I turned my thoughts to giving lessons in my native language, and by the kind recommendation of the late generous and noble hearted Duke of Orleans, whose interest was ever at the service of the unfortunate, I obtained a few pupils; but the remuneration which I received was so small, and the number of my pupils

so limited and inconstant, that my new occupation did not promise success, and the future presented nothing but the dark lowering clouds of coming adversity.

Misfortunes seldom come singly. Mine came upon me at this disastrous juncture, in rapid and overwhelming succession. To increase the load of calamity which my unhappy destiny at this time heaped on my devoted head, I had been despoiled of all the ready money I had in the world. Placing too much confidence in the good faith of society, I was deceived and robbed. I have been the dupe of those, on whose smooth tongues the pure precepts of morality, virtue, and religion, constantly hung, and who covered with the fleece of the lamb, the envenomed heart of the wily serpent. It is not in books, or in the brilliant saloon, that the human heart can be known; it is the force of circumstances alone that discloses its true nature. Two things are impenetrable, the depths of the sea, and the heart of man.

With a soul full of bitterness, I, one day, wandered into the Jardin des Plantes, and ascending the mound, on which the famous cedar, brought

from the Lebanon, is planted, I sat down beneath the shade of its wide spreading branches. The recollection of the happy hours I had passed in the bosom of the eternal mountains in which its roots were nurtured, rushed through my mind. I gazed upon the sturdy tree, like me a stranger from a land warmed by a more genial sun, and blessed with purer skies; its stem was firm, and its stout branches extended far on every side, covered with their soft and luxuriant foliage. In every part it gave signs of health, strength, and prosperity, and appeared destined to follow its gradual course to maturity and age through centuries yet to come, disdaining in its robust health the paltry influences of climate. How different the fate of him who, but a short time before, like the Syrian king of old, was lord of the hoary giants from whence this stripling sprung! The lonely tree flourishes like its ancient forefathers in the lofty Lebanon; but the unhappy prince is cast in his decline, to wither, seared and sapless, in a foreign land.

Stung by these bitter reflections, I burst into tears and gave myself up to sadness and lamentation. At length, my grief having got vent, began to subside

and gave way to my returning resolution. I fervently prayed to the Almighty to grant me strength, as He had already so often vouchsafed under former calamities, and putting my whole trust and confidence in His mercy, I dried my tears and hastily quitting the gardens, went to the house of a pupil and gave a lesson.

I had the good fortune during my residence in Paris to be introduced to many of the English nobility and gentry who were staying in that capital, either for their pleasure, or from their connexion with the British embassy. I had the honour of an introduction to Lady Granville, Lady Cowley, Lady Bentinck, Bishop Luscombe, Sir George Denys, and many other persons of distinction, at whose hands I received many proofs of courtesy and consideration. By their means, I at length became introduced to the late lamented Earl of Munster, who, being President of the Royal Asiatic Society of London, and learning that I came from the East, took considerable interest in my welfare. On being informed of the unfortunate position to which I had been so suddenly reduced by the pressure of unlooked-for

events, the result of which had been, the total annihilation of all my property, he took great pains to devise some plan by which my present necessities might be relieved and my future welfare provided for.

The present enlightened prime minister of France, who had ever been my stedfast friend, and to whom I cannot sufficiently express my gratitude, had advised me to proceed to England, where, from its boundless possessions in the East, he seemed to anticipate a large field for the exertion of my humble efforts in teaching my native tongue. The Earl of Munster strongly concurred with M. Guizot in urging me to take this step, promising me every assistance in his power, and offering to present me at the Court of Her Majesty Queen Victoria, and to use his best exertions to procure, on my behalf, an intervention for the purpose of obtaining from the Ottoman government a pension, or a sum by way of compensation, for the losses which I had sustained by the Syrian expedition, which had caused the ruin of a merchant at Beyroot, in whose hands no small part of my property was lodged, or, failing this, to make an effort to obtain a grant from the British govern-

ment, by the operations of whose forces these heavy losses had been occasioned.

Moved by the new gleam of hope which now seemed to break on the gloomy night of my darkened fortunes, I forthwith determined to adopt their advice, and, not long after, quitted Paris for London, well provided with letters of recommendation to many of the most eminent and distinguished personages in Great Britain.

I first arrived in London in May, 1840. After remaining there some months, I was advised by the Earl of Munster to return to Paris, settle the few debts I had incurred in that city, and then to take up my abode in London. After taking leave of my friends in Paris, I returned to London in March, 1841. I landed at the Tower stairs, and proceeded in company with Colonel Boyd, a gentleman who had come in the same vessel from France, and from whom I experienced the greatest attention and courtesy, to an hotel not far from the place of landing. It was early in the day and we ordered breakfast. With the breakfast things the waiter brought the morning paper, and handed it to my fellow-traveller, who occupied himself in its perusal

while the meal was in preparation. After some time I observed a sudden change in his countenance, as though he had met with some disastrous intelligence. I inquired the cause, and learned with horror, that the Earl of Munster had, only the day before, committed suicide in a fit of insanity. I was overwhelmed with grief. It seemed as though I was irrevocably doomed to misfortune.

I have now lived for three years in this mighty modern Babylon; but during the greater part of that time my solitude has been like that of the lonely bird in the midst of the desert. In the midst of millions I have been lone and silent as when I dwelt in my solitary hermitage at Mar Jirgis, little dreaming that, instead of that sweet spiritual seclusion which my ardent and youthful enthusiasm led me to prefer to all the pleasures of social intercourse, I was one day to find myself reduced to a seclusion of another kind, by a dire and inevitable necessity.

I shall never cease to regard as one of the most pleasing events of my life my introduction, through the kindness of M. Guizot, to the amiable nobleman who at the present moment repre-

sents the French nation at the Court of London. From his amiable and accomplished countess I have ever received the affectionate treatment of a sister.

Those to whom I brought letters of introduction received me with the utmost courtesy, and have ever since continued to treat me with undiminished kindness; but how is it possible, in a highly civilized and artificial community like that of England, for a poor unfortunate stranger, without fortune or appearance, to maintain an intimacy with the rich and powerful? Easier would it be for the camel to pass through the needle's eye. An education in the primitive state of society which exists in the East is but an indifferent training for the polished saloons of Europe. Amongst us alone the virtues of friendship and hospitality exist in their perfection; but, alas! for the artificial accomplishments which adorn the society of the West! They are unknown to us.

One solace in which I sometimes indulged to break the monotony of my existence was an occasional visit to the Zoological Gardens in the Regent's Park, to which I always had the privilege

of entering on a Sunday, through the kindness of a gentleman, a subscriber to the Society. The lonely and exiled condition of many of the poor animals confined there touched my heart. I felt a sympathy for their woes. Many of them, like me, were from the glowing clime of Asia, and, like me, were lonely strangers in a foreign land. The situation of the lion, above all, painfully pourtrayed the feelings of my mind, which vented themselves in expressions—"Noble descendant of the lord of the forest!" I said, "like you I live isolated, friendless, and in a foreign land." How sad the sight to behold this denizen of my native clime, hanging his majestic head, and unscornfully pacing to and fro in his narrow cage, pining for liberty and the freedom of his native forests. But what were my feelings on beholding the camel, that ship of the desert, the playfellow of my youth, my tried and faithful friend in many a dangerous strait. What a long train of recollections did the sight of that animal arouse in my mind—what thoughts of happy hours long forgotten, spent in the society of those dearest to me in the spring of my life!

"Alas, poor beasts!" I said, as I beheld the

camel and dromedary moving slowly and sadly from one side of their narrow paddocks to the other, "how different the chill damp atmosphere in which you now live, to the brilliant skies and scorching sun which look down upon the plains of Asia! Here, it is true, you have no parching deserts to cross, groaning under heavy loads, and forced to endure the extremity of thirst. But how greatly would you prefer them, and every other hardship, in your native clime, to lingering out a useless and captive existence under the blighting influence of ungenial skies, your energies untasked, and your sagacity untried!" As I uttered these words aloud in Arabic, the camel turned his grave eye upon me with so melancholy an expression, that I could not help thinking he understood me.

My expectations of deriving an income by teaching my native language, and translating Oriental works and manuscripts, have by no means been realized. It might possibly have been otherwise had it pleased Providence to spare the kind-hearted nobleman who took so warm an interest in my welfare. I have, moreover, suffered sadly in health

since my stay in England, where my formidable enemy, the 'tic douloureux,' has renewed his attacks with redoubled vigour, occasionally visiting me with paroxysms so violent as well nigh to deprive me of reason.

What pang is sharper to the warm and sensitive mind than to meet with cold indifference where the heart yearns for affection and sympathy? Calmness and fortitude, when displayed in the endurance of pain and calamity, are heroic virtues; but, when exhibited in the case of injuries sustained by false friends, are no better than a cold unfeeling egotism, which deadens the feelings, and soon leads to an indifference for all that is virtuous and good. The humble apartment in which I have taken up my abode happens to abut close upon a Roman Catholic chapel, and it has often been a sweet consolation to me, when lying on my bed exhausted with pain and anguish, and unable to hear mass, to catch the pious strains as they arose from the assembled congregation in accents of prayer and thanksgiving. I knew that many of those with whom I was acquainted attended mass and vesper at this chapel, and often I said to

myself, "Will they not put in practice the lessons they have just heard, and visit the poor and the sick?" But I waited in vain!

The exertions made by my friends to recover some of my lost property, and to procure me a pension, have also, up to the present time, proved unsuccessful; and God only knows what would have been my lot, had it not been for the repeated kindness and generosity of an illustrious personage, who has only descended from the highest place in the kingdom to rise still higher by the display of unostentatious virtues, the possession of which lifts their owner far above all worldly honours and dignities; and for the generous aid afforded me by a kind and noble-hearted friend, Mr. Hudson Gurney.

It is sweet to relate services received in the time of affliction. During my stay in London I have been much indebted to the kindness of the noble and high minded Chevalier Bunsen, whose talents and exertions are ever at the service of those whom they can benefit, and to the considerate attentions received from his amiable lady. It has also been my good fortune to become acquainted, through

the kind introduction of Sir Robert Inglis, with the widow of the late Mr. Rich, who formerly held the post of British Consul at Bagdad, where he distinguished himself by a frank and dignified fulfilment of his duties, and by his vigorous and learned researches. She has been my comforter in sickness, and my consolation in adversity.

Why should I despair? Has not Providence thrown me at length on a shore whose inhabitants are renowned to the uttermost corners of the earth for their noble institutions for the relief of every ill to which our nature is subject, where the hungry are fed, the naked clad, and where the destitute and houseless never fail to find shelter?

I will, therefore, take courage and abide with patience and resignation the progress of events, and, with a fervent prayer, that it may be the lot of no one that reads these pages, to encounter one-half of the calamities which have befallen their unfortunate authoress, I now, for the present, respectfully bid the British public farewell.

APPENDIX.

A Letter from the Bishop of the town of Alkoush, written to me a short time after the death of my Father.

[Translated from the Chaldaic]

To the presence of our honourable daughter in God.

May the apostolic benediction of peace in the Lord descend upon you, body and soul!

It is now some time since you wrote, requesting me to send you exact information respecting your brother.

Know then, my dear daughter, that I have written many times to El Sheik Abd El Ahad, an old friend of mine, and a worthy Christian, touching this matter.

He wrote me a letter some days since, but the information which he has sent me is wanting in precision. He tells me that your brother was dwelling amid the mountains of Tiara, near Madia, and was preaching the gospel amongst the barbarous inhabitants of those regions; that, disregarding all dangers, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, which burns in his heart, as in the hearts of the holy apostles, he ceased not to labour in the vineyard of the Lord, bringing back the lost sheep to their good shepherd, which is our Lord Jesus Christ. Since the receipt of your letter, even yesterday, I received

another letter. Alas! I have scarcely courage to break the fatal intelligence to you; but knowing your strength of mind, and your piety and resignation to the will of God, I thought it better at once to tell you, rather than conceal from you the intelligence, that your brother has met with a similar fate to that of your illustrious father, the lamented Emir Abdallah, and the rest of his family. He has fallen a martyr for the faith of Christ. Blessed are those who die in the Lord! It is through tribulation that we must enter the kingdom of heaven. Whom God loveth he chasteneth. This world is a dream, and we are as soldiers, fighting for the glory of their master, who, when covered with wounds in his service, receive at his hands their reward. What joy then to die for the true faith! How many times have you yourself longed so to die? How many times have you offered yourself a willing sacrifice in the holy cause? We are but wayfarers in this dwelling-place of sorrow, which we are destined sooner or later to quit. I shall rejoice to see you here if you can spare time to come, and may the grace of God be heaped upon you twofold and threefold.

(Signed, The humble Girgis, Bishop of Alkoush.)

Letter from the Great Amira Hasni Jehan, wife of the Emir Beschir, at Beteddin, to the Sitte Maria Teresa Asmar, at Rome.

[From the Arabic.]

The presence of our well-beloved and cherished El Sitte Maria Teresa Asmar. May the glorious and most high God preserve her in all health and prosperity!

We have received your letter, which has just reached us, and which has poured consolation into our souls, by the good news which it has communicated to us touching the state of your health, O, beloved of our hearts. I cannot

find words to express to you the sadness and grief which your absence has caused me. That amiable, soft, and melancholy countenance is ever present to my eyes; above all, when I climb the maksaf, my mind recalls that pensive look, as I cast my eyes over the boundless sea which now divides us. I hope we shall yet meet again before I die, or, if not on earth, at least in heaven. All the things in your letter have I understood; and, praise be to God! at this moment I am well, both in body and mind. You may make your mind easy respecting the presents which you sent me. I beseech you let me hear from you as often as possible, and may God preserve you.

April 15th, 1834. HASNI JEHAN.

Letter from the El Sitte Walidat Effendi Shehabi, wife of the Emir Amine, 3rd son of the Emir Beschir, at Beteddin, to the Sitte Maria Teresa Asmar, at Rome.

[From the Arabic.]

The presence of our much cherished and honoured friend. Maria Teresa Asmar. May God shield and protect her!

In the first place, I beg to assure you that our ardent desire is continually augmented to behold you in perfect health, with grace abounding.

Your amiable letter has reached us, and we are enchanted to learn that you continue to enjoy good health. Be assured that we are thoroughly persuaded of the constancy of your love and friendship for us, both far and near.

You say that you have sent me many letters—I have received but one. I also have written you many since your bitter departure in peace from our palace, which has caused us so much grief, and yet you have received but one. The

distance is so great, and the post so irregular, that they have been in all probability lost.

Our treasurer, Ibrahim Mosali, tells us that your most illustrious uncle, Monseigneur Basilius Asmar, has just been released from prison, and enjoys some respite from persecution. He is at present installed in the Archbishopric of Diarbekir, and it is thought that in all probability he will shortly be raised to the Patriarchate. He is going to write to you himself, which I hope will prove a consolation to you.

Our love and friendship for you will never be effaced from our breasts.

We entreat you to present our respects to the Cardinal of whom you speak, and beseech you to ask his prayers on our behalf.

Our daughter Shefkizar, praise be to God, is well. She sends you her love, and intends to write to you herself.

Do not forget to let us hear from you often.

May God protect and shield you.

She who loves you,

WALIDAT EFFENDI SHEHABI.

Nov. 1833.

Certificate from Abdel Messiah, Bishop of Damascus, to the Sitte Maria Teresa Asmar, a daughter of adoption, at Rome.

[From the Arabic]

I, whose name is undersigned, attest that the Sitte Maria Teresa Asmar, niece of Monseigneur Basilius Asmar, Archbishop of Diarbekir, belongs to one of the noblest families of Bagdad. Her father, the Emir Abdallah Asmar, suffered the bitterest persecutions in the cause of the Christian faith, in the support of which many of her family have been massacred, their goods confiscated, and her uncle banished.

The lady herself went on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, with the intention of retiring to some convent for the purpose of consecrating herself to the service of God; but, before entering the convent, the Great Prince of the Lebanon invited her to accept the post of kirghiah, or lady of honour to the Amira his wife. She remained there for some years, and was always treated with the highest regard and respect, and cherished with the warmest love and affection, as well on account of her virtues as her high birth and family. After having repeatedly asked permission to follow out her intention of retiring to some convent, which was constantly refused by the Prince and Princess, she at length resolved to carry her resolution into effect, and set out for Rome.

(Signed) ABD EL MESSIAH,
January, 1837. Bishop of Damascus.

[This certificate I wrote for in consequence of a series of persecutions, to which I was a victim through the conduct of an individual, who had circulated evil reports concerning me, alleging that I had been to many convents in the Lebanon, without ever entertaining the intention of remaining in any one, and that I had no serious purpose of remaining in any convent at Rome.]

Certificate from the Patriarch of Jerusalem, then residing at Paris, touching the Sitte Maria Teresa Asmar, in reply to some questions put to him by the late Duke of Orleans, on the occasion of his Highness interesting himself to obtain for me an advantageous appointment.

[From the Arabic.]

Praise be to God now and ever!

Maximus, by grace, Patriarch of Antakia, Iscandaria, Jerusalem, and all the Greeks, Malkites. and Catholics in the

rest of the East, bear witness in the sight of the Lord as follows:—

We have been informed touching the Sitte Maria Teresa Asmar, and certify from what we know that, according to our firm belief, founded on many letters and certificates which we have seen, that the abovementioned lady is the niece of the illustrious Mar Basilius Asmar, of the nation of Chaldean Catholicz.

Secondly, we have ourselves seen this honourable lady at the palace of the Great Prince of the Lebanon, the Emir Beschir el Shehabi, where she held the post of confidant and kaiack to the Amira, and was treated with all honour and respect, both on account of her noble birth and her own personal character.

Thirdly, when she was about to depart for Rome, with a determination to end her days in one of the convents of that city, we furnished her with letters of recommendation.

Fourthly, we have received intelligence from many of the convents in Rome, at which she resided, extolling in high terms her piety, her eminent virtues, and her religious conduct. In affirmation whereof we now give this certificate.

MAXIMUS, Patriarch of Jerusalem, and Antakia.

Written on the thirteenth day of March, 1841.

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K. H.

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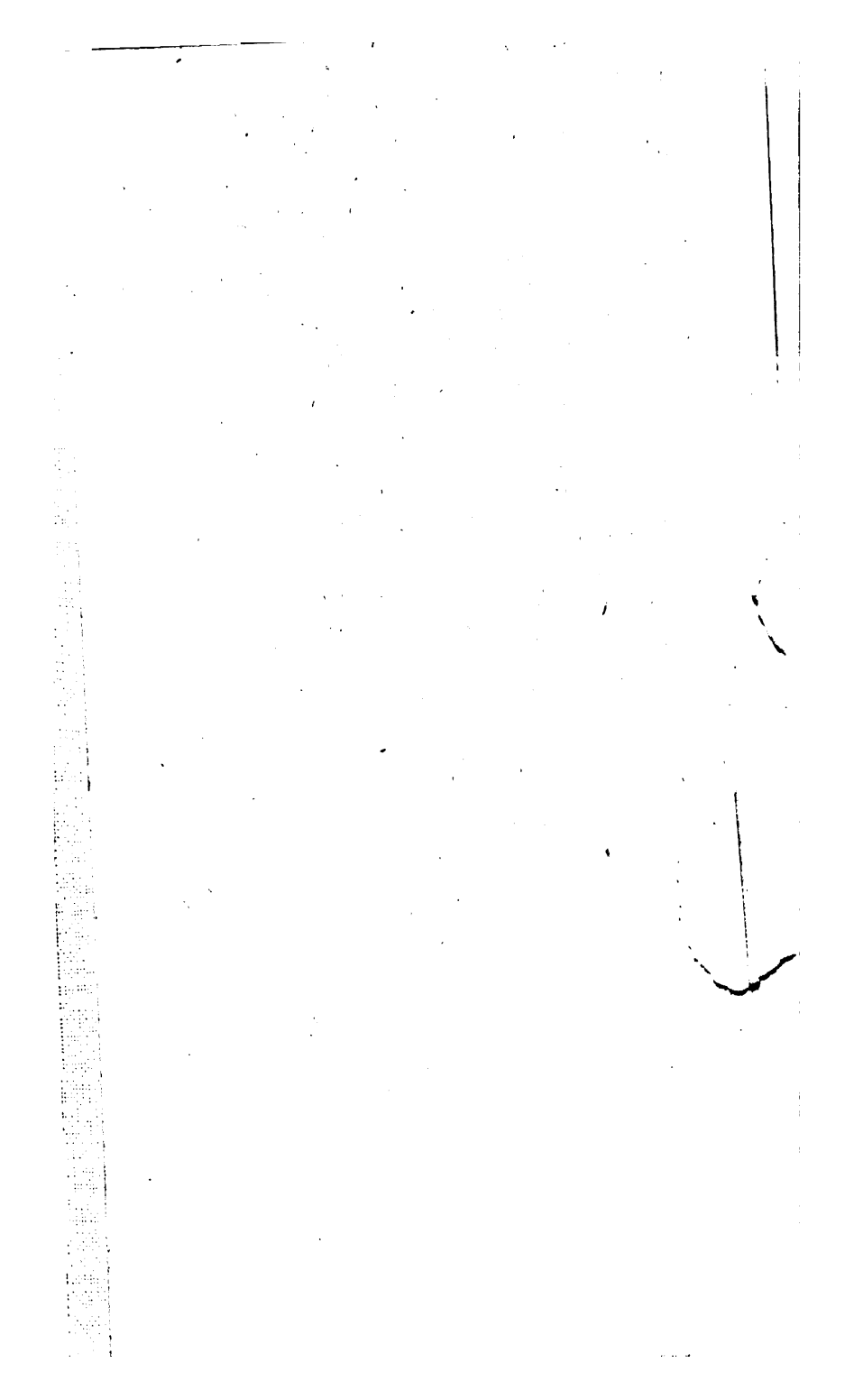

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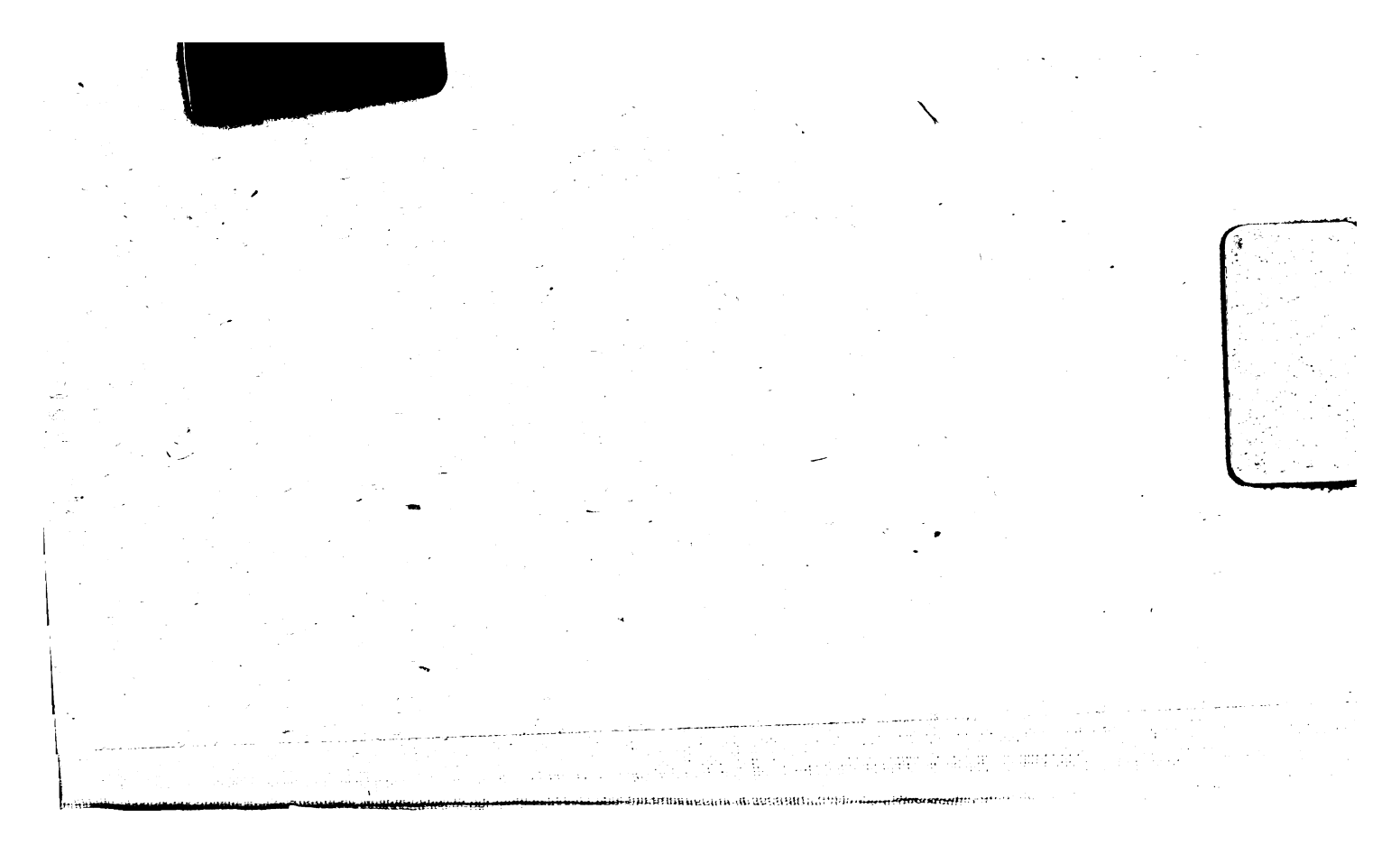
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